the weekly
Standard

NOVEMBER 25, 1996

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GORBACHEV IN HELL

by P. J. O'Rourke

he Hunger Artists
ICHOLAS EBERSTADT

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"She was lying face down in the water!"

Floyd Buffington, a truck driver for CF Motor Freight, was driving his regular route late one night. It was a familiar road, one he had driven without incident countless times.

Suddenly, as he rounded the crest of a hill, his headlights caught the smoking remains of a horrible accident. He brought his truck to a halt and called for help on the C.B. He jumped from his cab to rescue a girl lying face down in a pool of water.

Gently pulling the badly hurt, semi-conscious girl out of the water, Floyd comforted her until help came. He sat with her in that wet, dark median, doing everything he could to ease her fear and pain.

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VOLUME 2, NUMBER 11 • NOVEMBER 25, 1996

2 SCRAPBOOK

4 CASUAL
Joseph Epstein gives thumbs up to basketball with Siskel.

6 CORRESPONDENCE

9 EDITORIAL
Silencing Speech in the Name of Reform

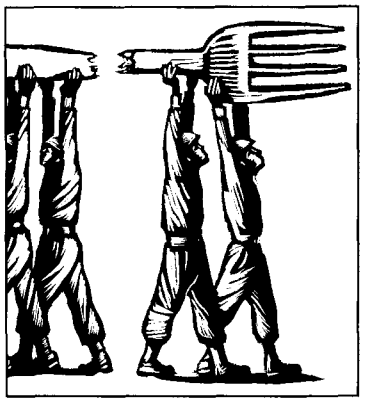
11 WILLIAM JEFFERSON COMSTOCK
Bill Clinton plays Bill Bennett. *by* **DAVID BROOKS**

13 MARIO SAVIO'S LEGACY
The Free Speech man expires with laurels. *by* **MATT LABASH**

15 NEWT AND THE LONG KNIVES
The speaker faces a mini-revolt. *by* **MATTHEW REES**

17 LENIN'S TOMB WITH A VIEW
Say it, Boris: "We will bury him." *by* **ARNOLD BEICHMAN**

40 NOT A PARODY
Transgendered Tea



18 THE HUNGER ARTISTS
Are do-gooders killing the hungry with kindness? *by* **NICHOLAS EBERSTADT**

20 THE U.N.'S FOOD FIGHT
A summit in Rome showcases the latest, falsest hunger myths. *by* **DAVE JUDAY**

26 THE BROKEN ARC
A wake-up call for the GOP. *by* **TOD LINDBERG**

29 LOSING THE EDUCATION ISSUE
How the GOP blew it. *by* **CHESTER E. FINN, JR.**

31 VOTERS V. JUDGES
The case of the "Stop Juvenile Crime Initiative." *by* **ANDREW PEYTON THOMAS**

BOOKS 33 GORBACHEV IN HELL It's gonna be a hot time for the last Soviet leader. *by* **P.J. O'ROURKE**

THEATER 36 SPRINGTIME FOR FURTWÄNGLER A play examines a great musician. *by* **PAUL CANTOR**

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THE WEEKLY STANDARD (ISSN 1083-3013) is published weekly, except for the third week of July and the last week of December, by News America Publishing Incorporated, 1211 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY, 10036. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Send subscription orders to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96153, Washington, DC 20090-6153. Yearly subscriptions, $79.96; Canadian, $99.96; foreign postage extra. Cover price, $2.95 ($3.50 Canadian). Back issues, $3.50 (includes postage and handling). Subscribers: Please send all remittances, address changes, and subscription inquiries to: THE WEEKLY STANDARD, Customer Service, P.O. Box 710, Radnor, PA 19088-0710. If possible include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. For subscription customer service, call 1-800-983-7600. Send manuscripts and letters to the editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. The Weekly Standard Advertising Sales Office in Washington, DC, is (202) 293-4900. Advertising Production: call Natalie Harwood, (610) 293-8540. Postmaster: Send address changes to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 930, Radnor, PA 19088-0930. Copyright 1996, News America Publishing Incorporated. All rights reserved. No material in THE WEEKLY STANDARD may be reprinted without permission of the copyright owner. THE WEEKLY STANDARD is a trademark of News America Publishing Incorporated.

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As Corny as Kansas in August

Now we take you to the great Republican state of Kansas, where Democrats went kind of bonkers trying to defeat Republican House candidates. Seems that freshman Republican House member Todd Tiahrt found himself in a close race against Democrat Randy Rathbun. Voters received anonymous phone calls informing them that Tiahrt had allowed his 15-year-old daughter to pose in "provocative" photographs. Turns out that Tiahrt's daughter had in fact been photographed—four years earlier, and by a run-of-the-mill children's portrait studio. The photographs, to put it mildly, were far from "provocative"—though the voters would have no reason to know that. No matter. Tiahrt won.

Elsewhere in Kansas, the Olympic runner Jim Ryun ran again—for the House, as a Republican. Ryun is a serious, social-conservative Republican. His Democratic opponent, John Frieden, tried to make an issue out of that. An article Ryun and his wife published in *Focus on the Family* magazine was circulated by Democrats in the district. The piece described the Ryun family approach to dating: A prospective suitor must sit down and discuss with Mr. Ryun his views and intentions—as in marital intentions. Mr. Ryun and the suitor must pray together. After this, the two sets of parents share a visit. Finally, if the young couple proves to have mutual feelings, the suitor might be included in various family outings.

Frieden charged that Ryun was "out of the mainstream." A "professor of social welfare" at the University of Kansas denounced the Ryuns as "extremely controlling" and "very patriarchal." And even Dr. Ruth was hauled out. "I actually think it's cruel to send a young person to a regular college with these kinds of interdictions," said the shrimpy sexologist.

Ryun won, too.

The ADL Never Rests

Congratulations to the Anti-Defamation League, which is now taking its noble mission against anti-Semitism to new heights—of arrant absurdity. Its target: the U.S. Navy, which had the gall to agree to help with a rally to be held by Promise Keepers. That's the organization whose purpose is to help men take responsibility for their wives and children by, in part, honoring "Jesus Christ through worship prayer, and obedience to God's word."

The ADL wrote a letter to Navy Secretary John Dalton expressing concern about "constitutional issues" raised by a "branch of the Armed Forces' involvement with an explicitly Christian men's movement." Dalton, of course, immediately backed off and the Navy issued a statement reassuring all concerned that there would be no "Navy speakers, no uniforms," and no encouragement given to the event.

Thank God those Navy men are being protected from the pernicious doctrines of self-restraint, fidelity, and chivalry. And the rest of us from a dangerously Christian military. Does the ADL have nothing better to do?

David Brinkley Was Right!

Bill Clinton *is* a bore. He's back to his pre-Dick Morris habit of blathering endlessly and turgidly about issues he is desperate not to discuss. Last week, at a press conference, he gave an answer about his stand on a balanced-budget amendment to the Constitution that was a masterpiece of windbaggery and so confusing that his treasury secretary, Robert Rubin, had to come out two days later and clarify the president's views. (Clinton is still against the amendment, it turns out, but you would never really know that from listening to the president himself.) His answer, in full:

"You know, my problems with [the balanced-budget amendment] always were—you know, I lived under one as a governor, and we produced 12 balanced budgets and I'm trying to get back to a balanced budget system here. My problems with a constitutional amendment were always more a question of how to manage the larger economic problems of the country—the nation's budget is different from a state, and I just want to make sure that if we have one, it needs to be clear in terms of how—and it needs to really give us the possibility of dealing with a recession. You don't want to wind up with a Congress someday in a recession raising taxes or throwing unemployed people off health care because they're trying to get to a balanced budget. Then you could actually wind up making the deficit worse.

"If it sets a framework and says that in the 21st century in the economy we're going to be living in, other things being equal, we ought always to be balancing our books, I agree with that. I just don't think you—we may tie our hands more than we will achieve. So what I'm going to focus my energies on is getting the balanced budget. But I don't have

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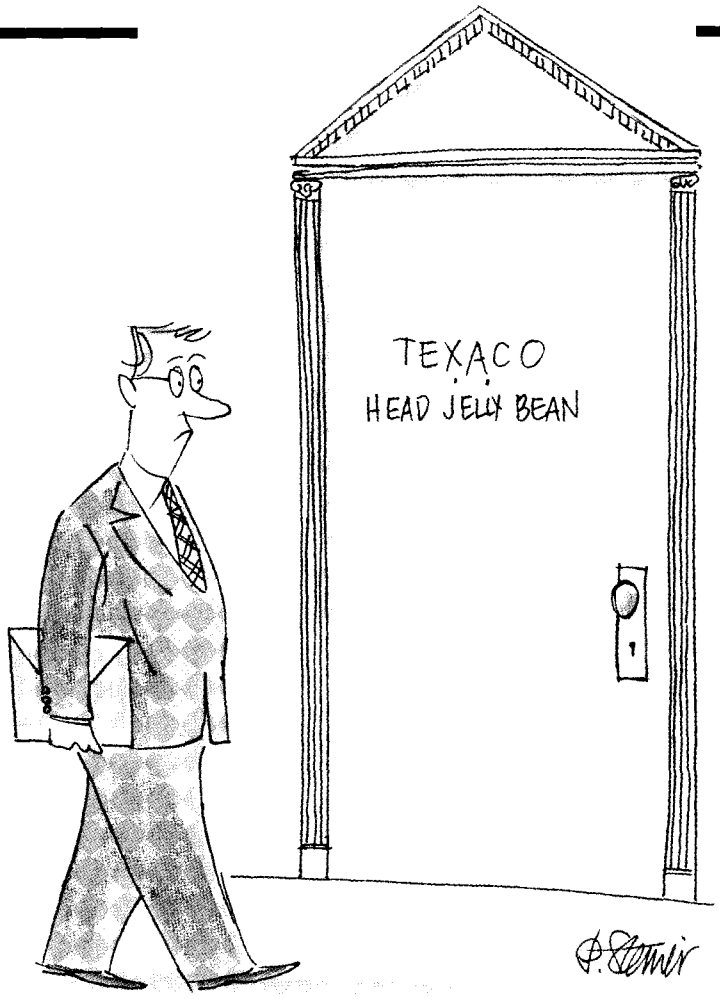

a vote in the Congress. My voice counts, presumably, but I don't have a vote. But I do have the responsibility to help the American people get the balanced budget, and that's what I'm going to focus my energies on. . . . I don't believe we need it, and it can't be an excuse—for a long time I was afraid it would be an excuse to throw the burden on somebody else, by the Congress, because by definition you have to have it down the road. It takes a while to ratify. But my belief is that you—I don't believe that we need it, but if we have it, it ought to be able to be implemented in a way that actually works and gives the country what it needs to manage a recession because, you know, we won't always have—someday down the road we'll have another bad patch in the economy. I mean, we just know that's going to happen."

WAIT! THERE'S MORE!

"You know," the president continued, "you don't have—no one has a total trouble-free life, no country has a trouble-free economy. Someday down the road—and we just don't want an amendment to wind up making our recession worse and causing us to do things that are counterproductive that you would never do in a recession. In a recession you would never raise taxes, and you wouldn't throw people who are unemployed through no fault of their own off of health-care eligibility because you were trying to balance the budget.

"So that's the only thing I'm—if the escape hatch is good, then we'll manage it the best way we can. The American people—we're a very practical people. We'll find a way to deal with the amendment if the amendment—the thing I want us to do is, if you look at this global economy, look how much more economic activity was generated in America when we lowered the deficit and lowered interest rates, and it totally overwhelmed the contractionary effects of reducing the deficit by holding spending down. And we would be better off in this kind of economy always targeting a balanced budget unless there is a substantial recession, in which case we don't want to raise taxes on people when they don't have as much money as they should anyway. That's what I'm worried about.

"So that's why I'm telling you, I'm going to be working on putting a balanced budget in there. If we get it, if we can get the Congress to pass a plan that will achieve that, we'll have the desired economic effect, short term and long term, and then whatever happens with the amendment will happen."

Keep talking this way, Mr. President, and those approval ratings you love so much are going to go down, down, down.

Say Bye-Bye, John and Fritz

Sick though everybody is of election talk, we here at The Weekly Standard will never tire in our effort to bring you, our loyal readers, the voting news—even if it involves a vote that will take place *two years* from now. *That's* how far ahead of the curve we are. (Either that or we don't have a life.) So here's the buzz around the Senate: After picking up two seats in 1996, Republicans may be positioned to make even larger gains in 1998. Not only do the Democrats have more seats up, but two key Democratic senators are considering retirement.

Pre-election, Louisiana senator John Breaux told friends that if the Republicans held the Senate, he would not run in 1998. (He wants to be appointed ambassador to France.) And it looks like Fritz Hollings of South Carolina is retiring, most likely to avoid being knocked off by the popular former governor of the state, Carroll Campbell. Last summer, when Campbell was being talked up for vice president, Hollings sought to undermine him by telling reporters in which Campbell closets they might find a skeleton or two. Campbell vowed to get even with Hollings by going mano a mano with the veteran senator. So Hollings apparently plans to duck the fight.

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Casual

The Running of the Bulls

Two years ago I had a call from Gene Siskel, who lives in Chicago, as I do. Siskel is a man others envy, possibly hate, for having what looks like one of the world's best and easiest jobs: sitting before a television camera, chatting about movies, for maybe—who knows?—a couple million a year. He had heard that I thought the depiction of a character in the movie *Quiz Show* was anti-Semitic, and Siskel, who prides himself on his radar for anti-Semitism in the movies, thought I was wrong. He called to argue, which we did, rather civilly, neither side winning.

Toward the close of our conversation, he asked if I happened to be a sports fan. I allowed as I was. He said he had some really wonderful tickets to the Bulls games, and perhaps we could go sometime. "Sure," I said, "sounds swell to me."

In fact, I had been a Bulls fan from the basketball team's beginning in the city. I saw the team play in the middle 1960s in the old Ampitheatre, near the stockyards. I courted my second (and final) wife with half-season's tickets in the early '70s. Late in the fourth quarter of a close game, after Chet Walker had been fouled, she turned to me, clutched my hand, and announced, "We're in the bonus." Ah, thought I, a woman who knows about being in the bonus—here is a woman I must marry.

At one point in the '70s, I had a press pass to the Bulls games because I had arranged to write a piece for the *Chicago Tribune* on Bob Love, who had perhaps the most delicately elegant jump shot I have ever seen.

A few years later, I would knock off from my scribbling and drive down to the Angel Garden Orphanage gym on Ridge Avenue near Devon and drop in on Bulls practice sessions. I was born too late to travel to Pamplona to see the running of the bulls, but, I'm pleased to say, early enough to watch the Chicago Bulls practice before the great hype and hoopla of celebrity sports, with all its security and secrecy, had set in.

A few days after our conversation, Siskel called back to ask if I was free to join him in a week's time when the Bulls played the New Jersey Nets. We arranged to meet at his apartment. On the way to pick up the other two guys who were to go with us, Siskel explained that, when the Bulls moved from the old Chicago Stadium to the new United Center, he was offered these tickets, which, even though they were very expensive, he felt he couldn't refuse.

The seats were in the first row, on the floor, directly across from the Bulls bench. There were four of them, they cost $325 a shot, or $1,000 a game, and since the team plays forty-odd games at home . . . well, you do the math. Siskel decided to call up three wealthy friends to ask if they were interested in taking eleven games' worth of seats from him. All answered yes, if playoffs were included. Did I neglect to mention that with these tickets, parking was free?

The actual seats are well-padded bridge chairs behind a vinyl counter with places for food and drink and a television set (so that you can simultaneously watch the real thing and the televised thing). A waitress took our orders. Nothing easier to get used to, I have always found, than prosperity.

Siskel had learned a thing or two from these seats. "When Scottie [Pippen] breathes through the mouth," he alerted me, "it means he's going for the hole." And, lo, Pippen did, every time. The Bulls lost the game, blowing an 18-point lead to a lackluster Nets team. When the game was over, I told Siskel that I assumed that, at these prices, one got to take home one's chair. It proved not to be so.

So for one night in my life, I sat in the Jack Nicholson seats, albeit without the hair plugs, the four-day growth of beard, or the malicious grin, but up close and nicely distanced from my detestable fellow fans. I shall never have a better seat, and consequently feel it pointless ever to return to the United Center. I cannot abide downward mobility.

Driving home, I couldn't quite get the price of those seats out of my mind. It wasn't my money, but even so I felt letting someone else pay so much so that I could watch a mere game was, somehow, immoral. Very well, I asked myself, what would I pay $325 to see? Nobody currently alive, I quickly concluded. The best I could come up with was that I would pay $325 to watch Enrico Caruso making love to Mae West, but only if he were singing while doing so and she, while all this was going on, emitted a continuous stream of brilliant off-color wisecracks. Well, maybe not $325. Two-fifty tops.

Joseph Epstein

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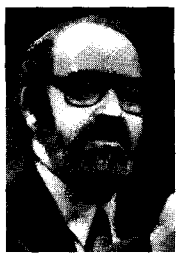

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American Despotism

The subject of David Brooks's "The Right's Anti-American Temptation" (Nov. 11) is profoundly disturbing. Yet as one who read the *First Things* symposium before I read Brooks's report, I find the headline and his conclusion about the nature of a certain conservative disenchantment off target. The issue here is not simply "loving one's ideal more than one's country," with its consequence of "withdrawing from public life." An important distinction must be made between America as it is and America the ideal. When the ideal is used to judge contemporary America, the result is not anti-American but pro-American. Genuine patriotism often means dissent from the current status quo.

For me, this is analogous to Martin Luther King, Jr.'s appeal to Americans to be true to America. I suggest that readers of the *First Things* symposium proceed immediately to rereading King's *Letter from the Birmingham Jail*, a comparison, I suspect, that Richard John Neuhaus would appreciate.

JOHN BOLT
GRAND RAPIDS, MI

The recent controversial symposium in *First Things* does not question the "legitimacy" of all of American government. It points to a serious and undeniable imbalance in the current operation of the separation of powers—as a result of judicial encroachment on the legislative function.

Moreover, Judge Bork's proposed remedy for this problem—amending the Constitution so that a majority in Congress can override any Supreme Court opinion—is hardly unique to him. When in 1992 a decision was pending in *Planned Parenthood* v. *Casey*, which could cause (in Justice Souter's words) "both profound and unnecessary damage to the Court's legitimacy," Sens. Kennedy and Biden had already served notice in Congress that they had enough co-sponsors of legislation to reaffirm *Roe* v. *Wade* and a "woman's right to choose"—no matter how the court decided *Casey*.

The editor of *First Things* deserves to be commended. He has patriotically provoked discussion of incipient judicial power-grabbing, of our hallowed system of checks and balances, and the supremacy of popular sovereignty.

PATRICK HENRY FLYNN
PEABODY, MA

David Brooks's article was both provocative and insightful. I must disagree, however, with his reluctance to face the primary issue raised in that symposium: the putative illegitimacy of the present "regime."

Those holding office in this nation derive their legitimacy from the Constitution. But those in office are in active rebellion against the Constitution and the people of this country. They are the real anti-Americans, not Father Neuhaus and his conferees. By

reading the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, and the Federalist Papers, one can compare the contents with the current interpretations from the courts and the law schools.

Such comparisons strike terror in the hearts of "loose constructionists" because they know that modern jurisprudence is a house of cards and does not rest on the bedrock of *stare decisis*. Are we to become willing participants in our own enslavement?

GEORGE KOCAN
WARRENVILLE, IL

Why is it "anti-American" to believe that government during the past thirty years has done just about everything it can to destroy the values that America has represented for over two hundred years? When government all but outlaws religious expression, officially sanctions infanticide, legitimizes homosexuality, and promotes illegitimacy, is it any wonder that we think government has become illegitimate?

WHITNEY H. GALBRAITH
COLORADO SPRINGS, CO

Sovereignty and the Canal

Thomas M. DeFrank's article "Reagan Was Right: The Panama Canal, Twenty Years Later" (Nov. 11) was both interesting and informative. A slight clarification: Under the 1903 treaty, the United States was not sovereign over the Canal Zone, but was authorized to conduct itself as if it were sovereign. Perhaps it would be correct to describe the situation as one in which the United States exercised *de facto* sovereignty without the grant of *de jure* sovereignty.

The United States should have significant concerns about events occurring in the Panama Canal Zone and about the future of the canal. We may even reach a point, should conditions deteriorate to an unacceptable degree, at which it becomes advisable to "rescue" the canal.

LAVERN C. HUTCHINS
GLENDALE, AZ

In Defense of the FBI

I was appalled to read the editorial "Richard Jewell and President Clinton" (Nov. 11). The criticism of the FBI was, at best, in error. America does have heroes today, and some of those heroes are in the FBI.

To suggest that the FBI "took one look and . . . said: *killer*" is preposterous, for it is the job of the FBI to sift through all the evidence. The FBI did not destroy Richard Jewell's life as the editorial stated. It merely performed its task with excellence and dismissed Jewell as a suspect.

I recommend that the editors visit Quantico to get a better sense of those whom they call "witch doctors." I thank God that they are there and always doing their duty.

DAVID A. NASS
GARDEN GROVE, IA

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Correspondence

Be Nice to Tammy!

Why was Matt Labash's Casual about Tammy Faye Bakker published (Nov. 11)? Labash crows with delight at his own cleverness as he writes that his request for an interview is, in truth, only a trick to "impale" her. What follows is a story of how he insults and mocks her. Remarkably, through it all, Bakker remains good-natured and gracious.

ROBERT COX
NASHVILLE, TN

A Choice of Words

How ironic that abortionist Warren Hern ("Dr. Hern and Mr. Clinton," Nov. 11) would describe the relationship between a pregnant woman and her unborn child as "one of host and parasite." Biologically, a parasite is an *organism* intimately connected to another organism. Hern thus unwittingly admits that the fetus is a separate living being, not some mere appendage of the mother's body, as abortion-rights absolutists would have us believe.

It is no surprise that Hern objects to being called an abortionist. The very term connotes the back-alley hackers of our past, grasping coat-hangers in their unwashed hands. Hardly a fair image for a man of science like Hern, who knows when a "long curved Mayo scissors may be necessary to decapitate and dismember the fetus." Dr. Hern is, after all, a professional. The far better description is "hit man."

D. A. RIDGELY
ARLINGTON, VA

Happy Homemakers

When F. Carolyn Graglia, in "The Breaking of the 'Women's Pact'" (Nov.11), declared that feminists hate homemaking and have "convinced society" to disdain it as well, she omitted a statement of facts, perhaps because it would weigh heavily against her.

No-fault divorce is a controversial topic among feminists; some would join Graglia in opposing it, believing that it has hurt homemakers. But there is little dispute that the feminist notion of marriage as a partnership has greatly increased women's legal share in their marital estates, to the benefit of many first wives.

In fact, society still idealizes homemaking, as popular women's magazines replete with articles about child-rearing, decorating, and cooking attest. Political campaigns created an icon out of traditional family life. How many male candidates are hurt by being portrayed with wives and children at their sides? How many female candidates are helped by childlessness and spinsterhood?

Graglia's suggestion that women were always free to choose careers over homemaking has an equally tenuous relationship to reality. I'm glad that she encountered no discrimination in pursuing her legal career in the '50s, but she shouldn't universalize her experience. Until 1972, colleges, universities, and professional schools openly maintained exclusionary quotas for women, which amounted to generous affirmative-action programs for men. According to a 1969 survey, admissions officers at 19 (out of 25) northeastern medical schools admitted that they "accepted men in preference to women unless the women were demonstrably superior."

Disproportionate numbers of women were turned away from presumptively male professions because they were as good as their brothers, but not better. They would probably disagree with Graglia's assumption that their own preference for domesticity kept them at home or in lower-paying female occupations.

WENDY KAMINER
CAMBRIDGE, MA

The real enemy of traditional female roles is not women, but men. The unholy alliance that pushed no-fault divorce was surely confused, but men have taken full advantage of easy divorce to exploit and abandon wives (including homemakers) in favor of younger and sleeker women. Unfortunately for the anti-feminist crusaders, many of the men who have enjoyed the fruits of easier divorce are Republican and conservative. Perhaps Graglia should interview Bob Dole, Phil Gramm, Charles Murray, Ronald Reagan, George Will, and Newt Gingrich (all on their second marriages) to find out how they think we can encourage young women to put all their eggs in one basket, just like in the old days. I bet they won't suggest making divorce impossible, bringing back large alimony awards, or reviving customs that barred divorced men from holding public office or climbing the corporate ladder.

AMY L. WAX
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA

Mrs. Graglia overstates the influence of feminists. The length of our lifespans and the uncertainty of our economy require that all of us, male and female, display much flexibility. We must reinvent ourselves from time to time.

The feminist vs. homemaker polemic is not salient for most people's lives. In my experience, people are pragmatic rather than ideological about these decisions.

SALLY EATON
CONCORD, MA

No Credit for Bubba

In his article "Too Much Too Soon" (Nov.18), Matthew Rees states that "A sliver of the tort-reform bill passed and was signed into law by Clinton."

This is incorrect. Bill Clinton deserves no credit. The Securities Litigation Reform Act, the only piece of the tort-reform legislation that became law, did so only because the Congress overrode President Clinton's veto.

DON SUTHERLAND
WASHINGTON, DC

THE EDITORS RESPOND: ***The mistake was edited into Rees's article. We should have known better, and we apologize to our readers and to the author.***

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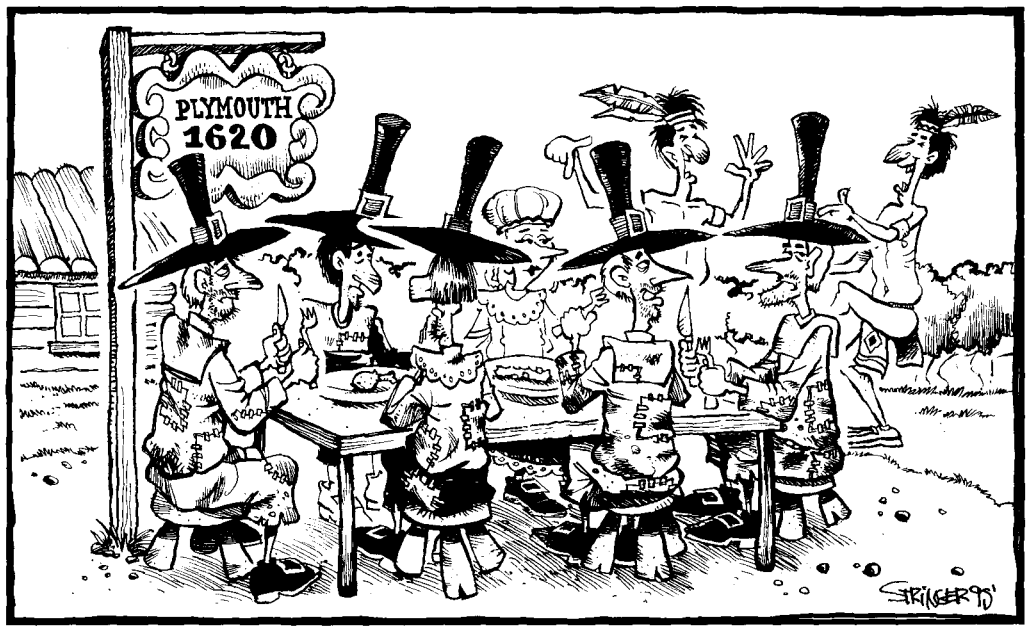

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The Plymouth Colony's plan was communal living. Hunger ended that. Now direct, income taxes bring us full circle.

When the Pilgrims landed in 1620, a communal society was mandated by the terms of their contract with London Adventurers. After starving for three years, the Pilgrims abandoned communism, legalizing private property and personal economic freedom. The first real Thanksgiving followed.

Since the birth of the U.S., the government has pursued its slow and silent encroachment upon these personal freedoms. The rising frustration among our citizens is directly linked to the rise in tax burden and the decline in our standard of living because government itself represents nearly 25 percent of our economy.

Guilty until proven innocent.

Direct taxes require you, and many others, to report your income. You are subjected to audits where the tax code assumes your guilt and the burden of proof lies with the taxpayer. The Constitution guarantees a criminal is innocent until proven guilty. But when revenue is at stake, government negates the basic freedoms our Founding Fathers fought to preserve. While the Constitution prohibited direct taxation and debtor's prison, the current tax code nullifies not merely the Founders' dreams, but circumvents their very safeguards against a greedy, spendthrift political structure.

At best, the Pilgrims' communal failure intended *equal* distribution of wealth. But the 16th Amendment, not merely reversed the Constitution's safeguards against government's natural desire to grab greater levels of revenue, it also opened the door to the redistribution of wealth philosophies made popular by Karl Marx.

When you sit down this Thanksgiving Day, reflect upon how far we have transgressed from the original design of the Constitution. Think about all the red tape, the deficit, the huge national debt, and the social decay. Ask yourself, "Have we honestly improved upon the dreams that brought so many to this land in search of personal freedom?"

Real reform or the flat tax?

In the coming months, a decision will have to be reached. Do we continue our current course with false reform, like the flat tax, reducing all deductions while retaining the guilty-until-proven-innocent approach? Or do we seek to restore the economic freedoms as first envisioned through the experience of our Founding Fathers? This choice between direct, intrusive income taxes and the personal freedom of an indirect system of retail sales tax will determine the destiny of our nation. The 21st Century will either evolve as George Orwell's vision or will be the rebirth of a new age of enlightenment.

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the weekly Standard

Silencing Free Speech in the Name of Reform

It has come to this: A respected federal official, Bill Bradley, publishes an op-ed about campaign finance in the *New York Times* arguing for a constitutional amendment that would restrict the political speech of his congressional colleagues, their would-be successors, and American voters as a whole. And no one utters a peep of complaint. Indeed, the president of the United States, most Democrats, and an alarming number of Republicans all claim to share Bradley's goal, if not his means.

This campaign "reform" business is totally out of control.

The current campaign-finance mess dates from the 1976 Supreme Court decision in *Buckley* v. *Valeo*, a case that challenged the constitutionality of election laws enacted just two years earlier. The court declared it unconstitutional for federal law to limit the amount of money spent by campaigns that refuse public funding. (This ruling made it possible for Ross Perot to spend $60 million of his own money in 1992, and Steve Forbes to spend upwards of $30 million in 1996.)

But citing fears about the "appearance of corruption," the court did allow the government to monitor and cap donations to individual candidates for federal office in any primary or general election. Most notably, the court upheld bans on individual contributions over $1,000 and contributions over $5,000 by political action committees (PACs).

Campaigns are considerably more expensive today than they were in 1976. It costs more to do everything today—you could buy a half-gallon of milk for pocket change back then, after all. But the $1,000 limit on personal contributions remains frozen in time. The unhappy result is that candidates now spend less time campaigning and more and more time hunting for more and more benefactors—the "money chase" we all decry. And since it is always easier for current officeholders to attract such money—and since their day jobs, performed live on C-SPAN, provide them publicity their opponents can rarely match—the electoral advantage of incumbency has never been greater.

The *Buckley* decision has distorted politics in ways everyone acknowledges and no one likes. But the problem is deeper still. The Supreme Court did strike down as unconstitutional most restrictions on campaign spending. In sweeping language, it ruled that "it is not the government, but the people—individually as citizens and candidates and collectively as associations and political committees—who must retain control over the quantity and range of debate on public issues in a political campaign." But for some reason the court failed to apply this excellent principle to *all* forms of campaign spending.

The current Supreme Court is troubled by the inconsistency. In June, a narrow majority struck down restrictions on certain kinds of spending by state-level political parties (the New York Democratic party, the California Republican party, and so on). But it left untouched the federal law that forbids unlimited contributions to individual candidates.

The ruling leaves election law even more incoherent than it was before. If a state party now has the right to spend an unlimited amount of money, how exactly is that different from allowing unlimited *contributions* to that party's candidates?

Still, the Supreme Court is at least moving hesitantly in the right direction: toward the First Amendment. But in their haste to redress the ugliness and irrationality of the status quo, self-styled reformers are moving headlong in the opposite direction. Bills were introduced in the last Congress that would eviscerate constitutional protections on political speech. The legislation imposes "voluntary" limits on campaign spending that aren't really voluntary at all, and assigns the Federal Election Commission powers of prior restraint to enjoin "excessive" campaign advocacy. If you are running for Congress and you simply announce an intention not to comply with the "voluntary" caps, your opponent is granted all manner of benefits—cheaper television time especially. In other words, you are penalized for the free exercise of your rights. And a penalized right, of course, is not really a right at all.

This legislation will be reintroduced in the House and Senate in January. It has some wind at its back. President Clinton has endorsed it again, with more fervor this time, in an effort to distract public attention from illegal foreign-money fund-raising the

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Democratic party appears to have conducted during the 1996 campaign. The congressional initiative is popular. Voters in six states have just approved ballot measures, most by wide margins, that apply its spirit and many of its features to local campaign law. But this kind of campaign "reform" is bad and wrong. And unconstitutional.

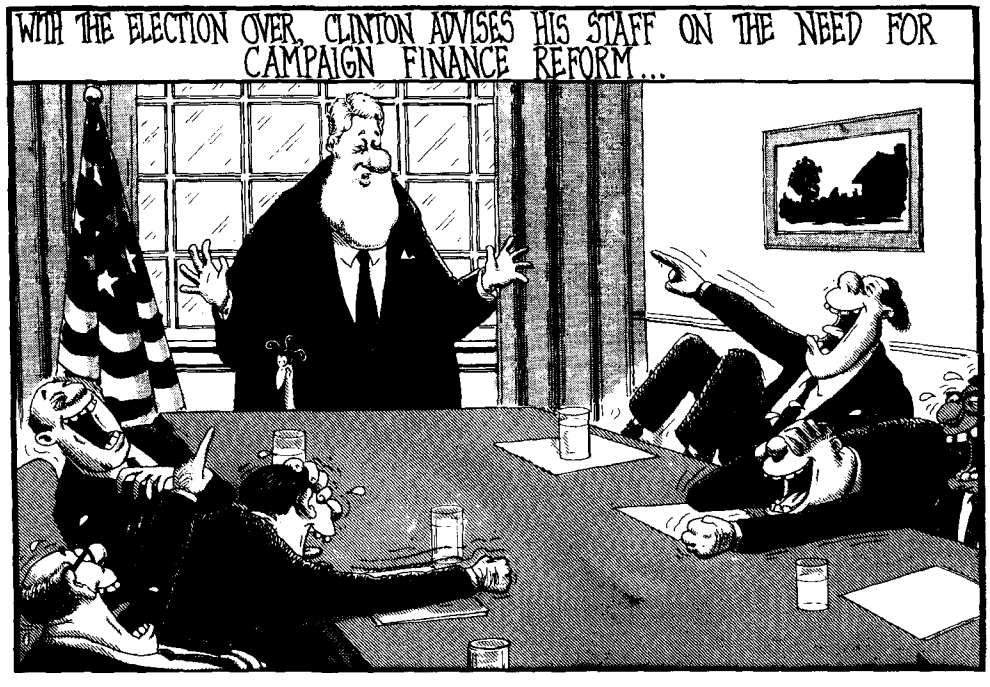
The constitutionality question makes "reform" legislators uncomfortable. Few of them endorse Bill Bradley's call for a shrunken First Amendment. Russ Feingold, the Democratic co-sponsor (with Republican John McCain) of the major campaign-finance measure in the Senate, is quick to say he has "very strong reservations" about Bradley's proposal. All that he really means, though, is that he has very strong reservations about being criticized for such a shockingly explicit move. Feingold and company would prefer to proceed surreptitiously, pretending that their initiative holds no implications for the First Amendment.

And the anti-speech crowd is winning cover for this plan from a group of activist lawyers and legal scholars organized by the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University. The center is named in tribute to the Supreme Court justice who wrote the *Buckley* decision—the retired William J. Brennan. Ironically, the Brennan Center wants the Supreme Court to overturn *Buckley* and permit strict financial ceilings on campaign advocacy.

One of the organization's principal confederates, Ronald Dworkin, has published a *New York Review of Books* essay that purports to explain how the First Amendment does not proscribe—and may even *require*—such restrictions. The Brennan Center's literature describes Dworkin as "undoubtedly the world's most highly regarded legal philosopher and expert on issues of democracy." Nowadays, apparently, all it takes to win an honor like that is a pompous, prolix prose style and a smattering of footnotes to disguise your fuzzy reasoning. You certainly don't need to know what you're talking about; Dworkin doesn't.

An exponentially growing cascade of cash is drowning American politics, he writes, and it is "a disaster." No, it's a myth. The percentage of national wealth devoted to election spending has been level for three decades. According to the Federal Election Commission, spending by general-election congressional candidates for the 1996 campaign actually *declined* from 1994 if you adjust for inflation.

Having messed up big-time right off the bat, Dworkin proceeds to unroll a great lot of philosophizing mumbo-jumbo designed to obscure his fundamental mood: an aestheticized hostility to raw and unfettered campaign debate. He fails here, too; the mood peeks through. "If politicians had much less to spend on aggressive, simple-minded television spots," Dworkin writes, "political campaigns would have to rely more on reporters and on events directed by nonpartisan groups, like televised debates." Americans should model their politics after the more civilized "way in which the members of a college faculty or a fraternal society . . . govern themselves." Nothing significant will be lost in the transition, Dworkin claims. After all, modern political rhetoric "is now extremely repetitive," and a good bit of it could be dispensed with—by law. "Every European democracy does this," the world's most highly regarded legal philosopher points out, "and Europeans are amazed that we do not."



Sean Delonas

Europeans are also amazed that we bathe as frequently as we do. What the hell kind of argument is that?

And who now stands opposed to Dworkinism in defense of untrammeled electioneer-

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ing? Republican senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky does. The American Civil Liberities Union does. A few non-profit advocacy organizations do, too. Otherwise: silence. Opponents of the McCain-Feingold bill and its House counterpart grumble that the legislation fails to muzzle the two major parties equally, and that objection may prove sufficient to sidetrack the measure for another two years. But true campaign-finance reform shouldn't muzzle anyone at all. It would be nice if more than a handful of national political figures were prepared to say so out loud.

—David Tell, for the Editors

WILLIAM JEFFERSON COMSTOCK

by David Brooks

BILL CLINTON HAS JUST WON a convincing victory. He takes to the microphone for his first Saturday radio address after Election Day. So, does he lay out a sweeping vision for the next four years? No, he calls for an end to liquor advertising on radio and TV. You sit there and think, "Bill Clinton is turning himself into Bill Bennett." It's usually Bennett who jumps on some social transgression and raises a public stink—violent rap lyrics or Roberto Alomar spitting on an umpire. But this time, it's the president of the United States—not proposing legislation, not using the power of his office. He's just raising a stink.

Of course, he's doing something else as well. He's constructing a more conservative Democratic social agenda, one built on parental anxieties. Clinton means to show that Democrats are on the side of the mothers and fathers who feel their ability to raise decent kids is threatened by corrupt outside sources—violent TV programming, tobacco, drugs, and booze.

WHEN CLINTON DENOUNCED LIQUOR ADS HE WASN'T JUST RAISING A STINK—HE WAS STAKING OUT A BENNETT-LIKE MORAL AGENDA.

The liquor industry imposed a radio advertising ban on itself in 1936 and a television ban in 1948. But over the past decade liquor sales have tumbled 25 percent, while the beer industry—long a staple of the airwaves—floats along, spending $600 million a year on commercials. The Seagrams company, the second largest distiller in the United States, has for years been nettled by the unfairness of the "beer yes, booze no" advertising regime and unilaterally lifted the ban this summer. Seagrams aired a TV commercial in Corpus Christi, Texas, in which a dog named Obedience School Graduate carries a newspaper to his master and is beaten to the master's side by a dog named Valedictorian who is carrying a bottle of Crown Royal whiskey.

On November 7, the Distilled Spirits Council, the trade association for the liquor industry, announced it was ending the ban nationwide and instead was adopting guidelines intended only to keep hard liquor out of children's hands.

The outrage industry went straight into hyperbole. "This means open season on America's kids," thundered George Hacker of the Center for Science in the Public Interest. Reed Hundt, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, has been the most vociferous administration official. He regulates the broadcast industry, and he must love his work, because he's rarely far from a TV camera. Hundt made a series of media appearances declaring the advertising would be a menace to kids and threatened punitive regulations.

The issue might appear a tricky one for Clinton. After all, Seagrams is controlled by the Bronfman family, led by strong financial backers of the president. Clinton and Al Gore attended a birthday party for Edgar Bronfman, Sr. earlier in the year, and the president has dined several times with Edgar, Jr., the Hollywood mogul. Junior gave $318,000 to the Democratic party this election cycle and has contributed to Bill and Hillary's legal-defense fund.

But Clinton surely knows that Bronfman family members tend to keep their public interests politely elevated from the world of selling liquor. The Seagrams Company gives generously to both parties, and its Washington office is staffed by self-conscious conservatives who actively support free-market think tanks, conferences, and research projects. The Bronfmans rarely use their entree to lobby for company favors; they would consider it demeaning. The family uses its access to promote Jewish causes, not Seagrams business. (The one known exception came when Edgar, Jr. lobbied the president to ward off a liquor tax

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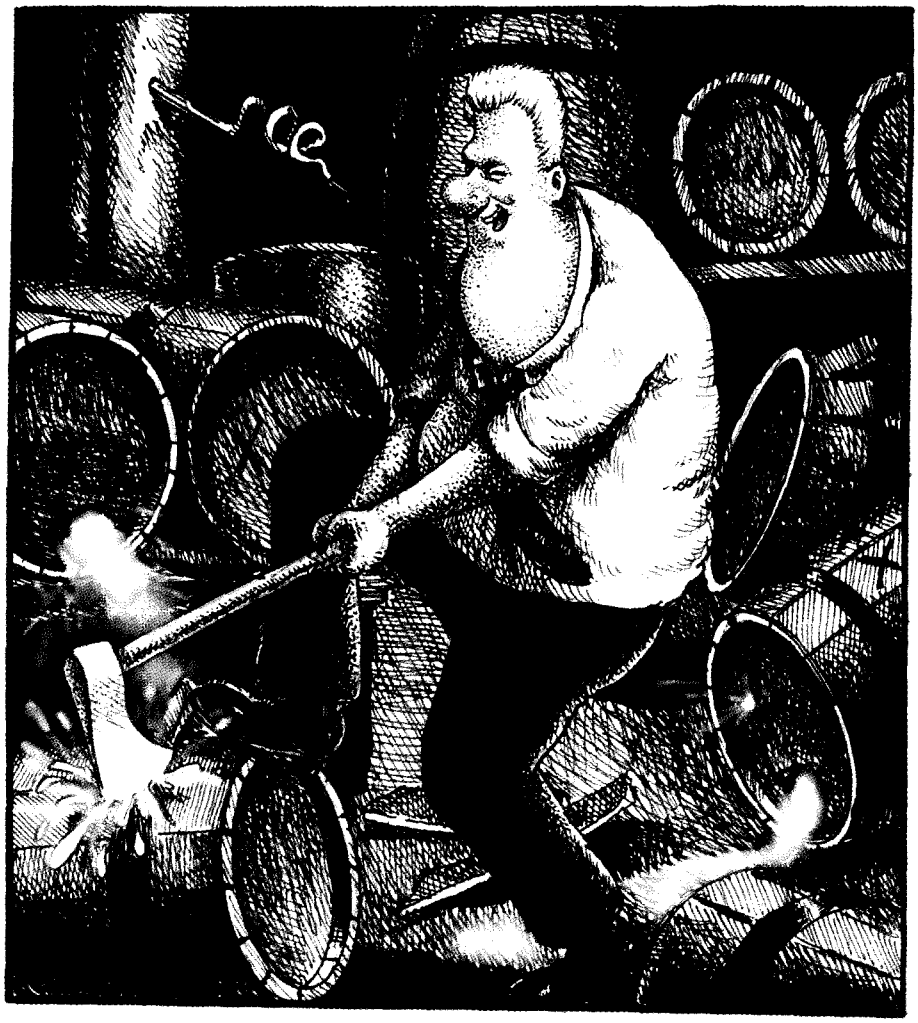

Sean Delonas

as part of Clinton's original health-care plan.)

More important, perhaps, is the fact that several federal agencies have already endorsed the idea that beer and liquor are equivalent and should be considered equally harmful. Indeed, there's a Machiavellian interpretation of the liquor industry's move. It holds that the liquor people hoped to fuel such outcry that beer advertising too would come under scrutiny. If both liquor *and* beer ads were pressured off the air, the two products would compete on an equal footing.

It's hard to believe the liquor people would actually plan such a carom shot. But, after the assault on tobacco, it's not impossible to imagine the Clinton administration's expanding its moral crusade to include the beer makers. The administration has been ambitious on this score. White House policy adviser Rahm Emanuel, who shepherded the liquor-advertising issue into the Oval Office, was instrumental in some of the other bricks in the New Democrat social agenda. He was one of the advisers who urged Clinton to advocate school uniforms in 1995—one of the first examples of Clinton's effort to seize the conservative mission of remoralizing society for the Democratic party.

The New Democratic understanding of the demoralization problem is shaped by an environmentalist metaphor: While the home is a clean area where parents are trying to raise decent kids, there are cultural polluters outside injecting toxic waste into children's minds and bodies.

The Clinton campaign pushed a series of measures to punish polluters and help parents. Clinton promoted the V-chip so that parents could control the television programming allowed into their homes and influence the products churned out by Hollywood. He urged broadcasters to replace trashy television with three hours a week of educational programming for children. He lambasted the tobacco industry for allegedly pushing cigarettes at kids. He hit the liquor industry for tempting children, both over the summer and in his recent radio address.

The constant invocation of "children" wasn't just poll-driven. The New Democrats operate in a milieu shaped by social libertarianism, the belief that communities don't have the right to impose their values on individuals. Every moral issue must therefore revolve around children, since everybody believes communities have the right to impose values on kids. So the anti-tobacco campaign is undertaken in the name of children, as is the anti-liquor campaign. Conservatives are much quicker to say that community standards should be imposed on individuals, while New Democrats try to impose community standards on individuals through the back door, using children as a point of entry.

Clinton's goal is a Bennett-like campaign to influence perceptions. But unlike Bennett's efforts, Clin-

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ton's re-moralization campaign has a liberal twist: It avoids judgments on the actions of individuals. His attacks on tobacco and liquor are not centered on the use of the products but on their manufacture and marketing.

Clintonites may lambaste tobacco executives, but they tend not to judge smokers themselves. Instead, they blame objects. They speak as if the moral taint adheres to the tobacco, to the liquor, to the handgun itself, or to the medium of advertising. There's an echo here of the way the nuclear-freeze movement acted as if nuclear missiles themselves exacerbated the Cold War.

Conservatives tend to argue that objects are neutral and that people who refuse to practice self-discipline are the problem. Conservatives don't say that tobacco and liquor themselves increase the likelihood of birth defects; it is undisciplined mothers who smoke and drink during pregnancy who increase the likelihood of birth defects.

Still, whatever the intellectual merits of this position, if Clinton pursues his sort of values agenda for the next four years, he may successfully inoculate the Democrats from the old charge that theirs is the party of permissiveness. It seems we're all Puritans now; we're just Puritanical in different ways. ♦

Mario Savio's Legacy

by Matt Labash

His chin dimpled enough to insert a bullhorn, his brow furrowed enough to seat two co-eds, Mario Savio was just a Berkeley sophomore when he gave life to the Free Speech Movement by shouting from the roof of a police car in Sproul Plaza in 1964. Conducting the original sit-in and protesting the banishment of political activities from campus, he raged against the university machine. It "makes you sick at heart," he cried. "You've got to put your body upon the gears . . . and you've got to make it stop."

They put Savio's body in the ground when that same heart stopped on November 6. Some say fibrillation got him, while others claim his heart was broken by the victory of the California Civil Rights Initiative.

Which is not to make light of the passing of the man whose actions sparked ten years of civil unrest and thirty years of nihilistic grievance groups that have made university curricula their playthings. Hearts were certainly heavy out West. "He had a moral force that almost glowed," said the *San Francisco Chronicle*. "He symbolized the possibilities in all of us, to resist becoming cogs in somebody's machine," said fellow student radical Tom Hayden, now a cog in the machine of the California State Senate. Elsewhere, Savio was compared to Thoreau, some Nobel laureates, Abe Lincoln, and Jesus, in descending order of importance.

Like another Queens-bred Mario who coasted for many years off of one great speech (Cuomo in '84), Savio cemented his historical standing as the leader of the Free Speech Movement (FSM), whose protests brought an end to Berkeley's political-speech restrictions and its policy of acting as parent to its students (*in loco parentis*, to use the now-archaic term).

His fierceness was equally effective whether he was being oratorical or occlusive (he once bit a cop on the thigh). His prose, however, would take a hash pipe and some jug wine to plow through. "There are just too many nonsense hours spent by American students, hours to 'do' much as one 'does' time in prison," he wrote, railing against Berkeley president Clark Kerr. Kerr dismissed the racket as a "ritual of hackneyed complaints"—though he hadn't seen anything yet.

Savio departed the FSM in 1965 after his arrest, and the movement only limped along for a brief while without him. But Savio and the FSM opened the floodgates for the politicization of education and showed the One True Way to both the anti-war and women's-lib movements.

After retiring from the FSM and most other New Left action, Savio was occasionally spotted on the periphery but managed to make scarce before things spiraled out of control. As Peter Collier, former FSM'er and expatriate leftist, says, "Savio had a Kennedyesque quality about him in that he was never there to see the destruction and destructive consequences of the kind of movement he helped give birth to, and somehow that allows him to retain, in this perverse way, a kind of innocence."

A good part of the reason for the rapturous eulogies to Savio is that he was AWOL for the sectarian catfights and narcissistic implosion of the New Left in the late '60s and early '70s.

Painfully shy and disdainful of media attention, he could never become one of the slick Sammy Glicksters like Hayden. Nor was he present when the so-called revolution actually came to resemble one, as manifested by the pistol whippings and pipe bombs of the

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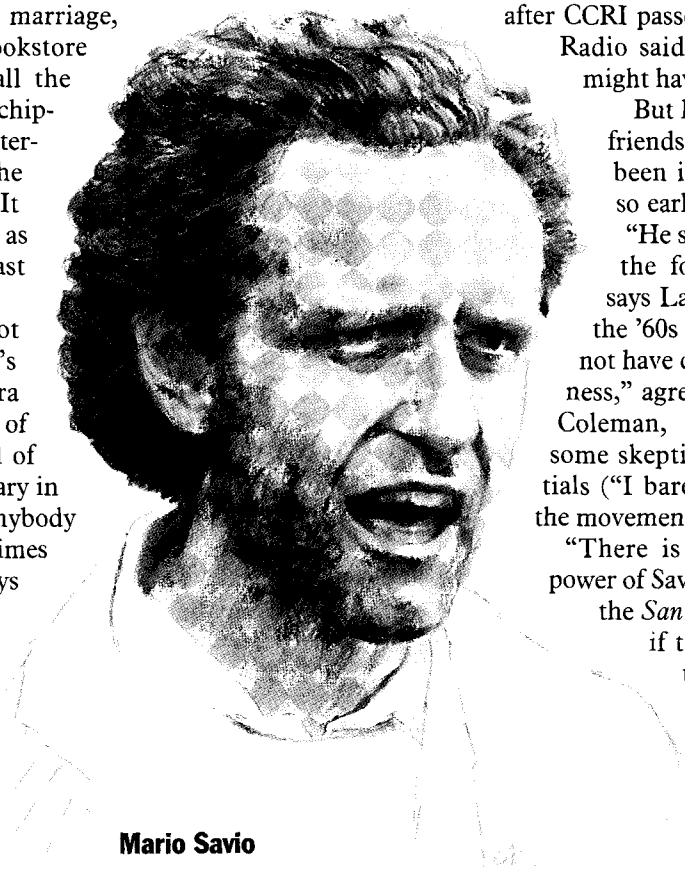
Black Panthers and the Weathermen.

Because of his self-imposed exile, he remained fondly remembered and unsullied. He never cheapened the nostalgia currency with embarrassing public lapses, like when Jerry Rubin sold securities or Bobby Seale sold barbecue cookbooks or Bobby Rush sold insurance or Eldridge Cleaver sold jeans with codpieces (and later sold out to The Man by becoming a Republican).

Instead, he suffered an emotional breakdown, had a busted marriage, worked odd jobs from bookstore clerk to bartender, and all the while remained his usual chipper self. "This has been a terrible century," he told the *Washington Post* in 1984. "It would be in the running as 'worst century' in the last twenty."

Such a demeanor is not unusual among Savio's peers, according to Laura X—former FSM'er, friend of Savio's, and current head of the Women's History Library in Berkeley. "I don't know anybody who lived through those times who wasn't depressed," says X, who dropped her last name to protest women's being "legally owned" by their fathers and husbands. "The Vietnam War not only took a toll on the people that went and came back and beat up their wives, but also the people here. We'll never recover from it."



Mario Savio

Chas Fagan

By way of recovery, Savio went on extended sabbatical. Even German radical Rudi Dutschke, who encouraged reform via "the long march through the institutions," would have had to admonish him to get on his merry way. After re-enrolling at Berkeley in 1970, he dropped out again, later attending classes sporadically in different schools before finally getting a bachelor's in physics in 1984 and getting his master's some years later. He had been teaching logic and math to remedial students at Sonoma State University for the last three years when he died.

After what he described as "15 years of rest," in the mid-1980s Savio started making like a good aging radical—railing against what he thought was a brewing Vietnam in Central America, singing folksongs at his son's graduation from the chi-chi D.C. private school Sidwell Friends, and attending the Italian Communist party convention.

The 1994 elections served as the impetus for his political reanimation. With typical understatement, he decided that "the country has been taken over by barbarians" and consequently battled against California's anti-affirmative-action initiative alongside relevant cultureburghers like the famous-for-being-famous hippie Wavy Gravy. He died the day after CCRI passed, and National Public Radio said his struggle against it might have done him in.

But his demise isn't as tragic, friends say, as what might have been if he hadn't taken flight so early in the first go-around. "He spoke for us in a way that the folks later on did not," says Laura X. "He could've led the '60s in a way where it would not have degenerated into viciousness," agrees former FSM'er Kate Coleman, though she expresses some skepticism about X's credentials ("I barely remember her from the movement!").

"There is little doubt about the power of Savio's legacy," rhapsodized the *San Francisco Chronicle*. And if they are speaking of the usurpation of a classical liberal-arts core curriculum and the early taste test of what passes today for free speech on campus, we all indeed owe him a debt—not just leading academic lights like Angela Davis, the Panther and Communist vice-presidential candidate who is now a professor of "the history of consciousness" (Huey Newton got his Ph.D. in the same field). The sons and daughters of the bourgeoisie, too, can now protest just about anything, and do!—from long cafeteria lines at Burbank High, to recruitment for *Playboy*'s "Girls of the Ivy League" issue at Dartmouth, to the non-departmental status of Chicano Studies at UCLA (which they denounced by breaking windows with chairs). You can now say anything you want, as long as it doesn't violate one of the nation's 400-plus anti-prejudicial speech codes ordered up by the very same people who burned the flag in the 1960s. And if you don't like what other people say, as Berkeley students didn't recently when a pro-CCRI editorial

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appeared in the *Daily Californian*, you can steal all 23,000 copies and go unpunished.

Where you once had to get permission just to pamphlet at Berkeley, you have in recent years been allowed to: go to class naked, get credits for talking about sex, conduct Breast Freedom Parades, and riot, loot, and overturn and set ablaze a firetruck because "it was springtime" and students had "been studying for months and had been oppressed." And those are just the extracurricular activities.

While Savio envisioned back in '64 having "*real* classes up there!" and "freedom schools," he could not have envisioned just how free his old cronies—the ones who failed to burn down the academy but now set its agenda—would get. Instead of slumbering through old bores like Plato and Aquinas, one is liberated to take "Mathematics for the Environment" at the University of Oregon, or Georgetown's "Prison Literature," where the authors are all inmates. The new canon is perfectly encapsulated in a single "Social Justice" class at Michigan, where the aim is to "learn about racism, homophobia, sexism, rape, incest, domestic violence, eating disorders, substance abuse, the AIDS crisis and teen pregnancy," as one works to bring about "changing the lives of people of color, women, gay men, and lesbians."

And if that's not a course of study you wish to pursue, try Yale's "Lesbian, Gay and Transgender Cinema," UC Santa Cruz's "Queering the Renaissance," Duke's "Gay Abandon," Harvard's "Fetishism," or Swarthmore's "The Bodies That Surround Us"—a class whose text is composed in a child's voice, with children's book illustrations of a naked man holding a naked boy's hand. The caption reads: "The guy took me home and at one point grabbed my arm and said make a fist. He suddenly pushed it against his butt. My hand disappeared. I was all shook up. Where did my hand go?"

At the 20th anniversary of the Free Speech Movement, Savio recalled: "It has remained a brilliant moment when . . . we were both moral and successful."

And today? Moral and successful? Well, one out of two ain't bad. ♦

Newt and the Long Knives

by Matthew Rees

Briefly last week, House Speaker Newt Gingrich appeared on the verge of toppling, pushed by a small band of House Republicans and outside allies. Columnist Kate O'Beirne launched the first strike. Writing in *National Review* after the election, she called on Gingrich, beset by ethics troubles, to abdicate temporarily in favor of the septuagenarian chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, Henry Hyde. GOP Rep. Steve Largent and conservative guru Paul Weyrich echoed O'Beirne's call for Gingrich to bow out, while Rep. Marge Roukema, a New Jersey moderate, announced, "I can think of no one better than Henry Hyde as speaker." Fellow moderate and Gingrich ally Chris Shays declared he would abstain from voting to make Gingrich speaker in January unless a long-awaited ethics report were released by then, while Rep. Pete King, a Long Island Republican, upped the ante, blasting Gingrich as "damaged goods" and "a handicap to the Republican party."

Top Republicans tended to disregard these statements as the work of publicity hounds ("As Pete King goes, so does *not* go the Republican conference," sniffs his conservative colleague, Mark Souder of Indiana), and it now appears Gingrich will face no challenge when House Republicans nominate their leaders on November 20. But Gingrich, his staff, and his allies were far from indifferent to the numerous brush fires and moved swiftly to stamp them out.

The most striking evidence of concern came on November 12, when 15 members of the House Republican leadership released a six-paragraph statement in support of Gingrich featuring the proclamation: "We unequivocally support Newt's re-election as Speaker for the 105th Congress." The statement, put together by Gingrich booster Rep. Bill Paxon, helped stifle the rumblings of mutiny. And the effort to bolster the speaker's position didn't end there. A senior Gingrich staffer called O'Beirne to express disappointment with her column and also sought to get King to pipe down. (He didn't. On both *Crossfire* and *Equal Time* on November 13, he again said that Gingrich should temporarily step aside.) Gingrich's appointee as head of the House Republican campaign committee, John Linder of Georgia, took time out from his new job to thunder against the renegades; "I think the membership ought to keep their mouths shut," he said. Gingrich himself spoke with Largent and claimed he received an apology, though Largent stayed mum. Gingrich and Shays spoke, but there are no hard feelings: Shays attended a November 11 dinner sponsored

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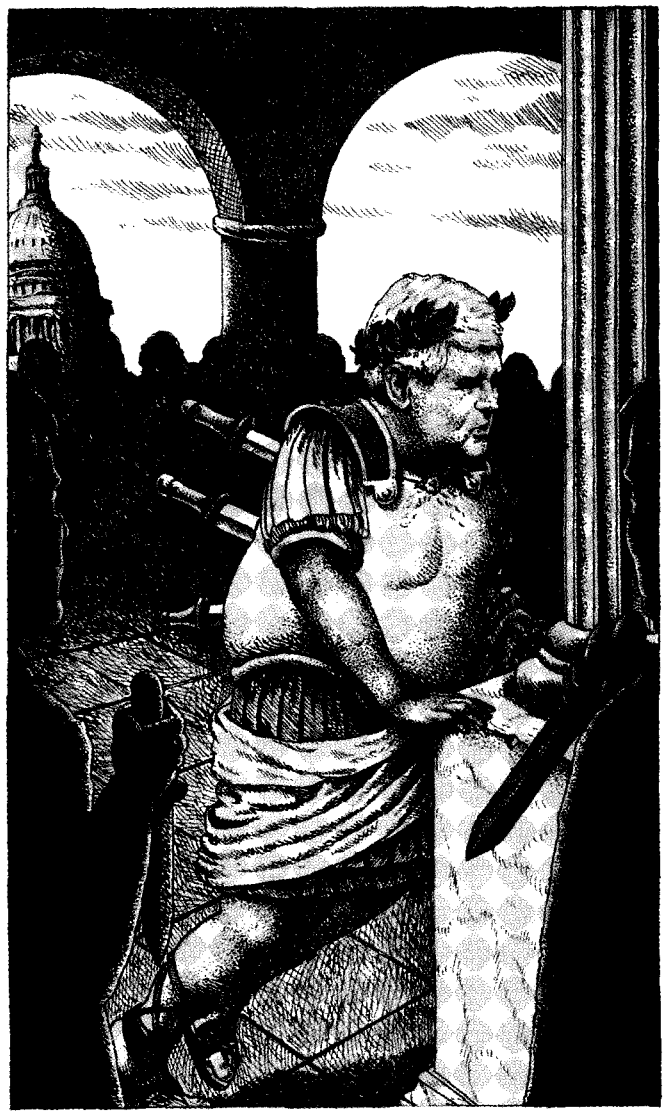
by GOPAC where Gingrich was a featured speaker, and they had a friendly chat the next day in the House gym.

Why all the fuss? House GOP sources say the real concern was never that Gingrich would face a serious challenge when Republicans gathered to nominate their new speaker. Instead, there was a wish to prevent any premature bloodletting before the potentially more troubling event: the release of the ethics committee report.



Sean Delonas

Anyone who's heard Gingrich speak in recent months knows that Democrats have filed 75 ethics complaints against him and that all but one have been dismissed. That remaining one is Gingrich's albatross. The alleged infraction is highly technical—Did Gingrich improperly use tax-deductible charitable donations to finance a partisan college course he taught?—but it prompted the appointment of a special counsel, James Cole, late last year.

When Cole filed a preliminary report with the ethics committee in mid-August, it immediately became the subject of partisan wrangling. Democrats demanded it be made public, while Republicans sought to block its release, claiming it was only a "draft discussion document" and contained no analysis, recommendations, or findings. (Largent and King were among those defending Gingrich on the House floor.) Democrats succeeded in forcing a September 19 vote on releasing the report but were easily defeated. That was thought to put Gingrich's ethics problems off the table until after the election, but seven days later a bipartisan ethics subcommittee voted unanimously to expand the inquiry. It instructed Cole to determine whether the speaker had provided "accurate, reliable, and complete information" to investigators. Bluntly, Did Gingrich lie or otherwise obstruct justice?

The GOP's nightmare scenario is for Gingrich to be installed as speaker and then have the ethics committee charge him with highly technical infractions that Republicans can't easily explain but that Democrats can exploit. One House Republican says this is a realistic fear and points out that if the preliminary ethics report had exonerated Gingrich, it probably would have been released before the election. Souder, an occasional critic of Gingrich's who supports his reelection, says, "We at least need some preliminary report before we vote in January." Some sort of report is expected in the next month, though no one can be sure because the five Republicans and five Democrats on the ethics committee are bound to secrecy.

Yet the willingness of some Republicans and conservative commentators to speak out against Gingrich—combined with the GOP's loss of House seats in the recent election—underscores the speaker's weakened position. Recognizing his vulnerability, Gingrich intends to adopt a lower profile. Thus, after a November 12 meeting with President Clinton, he deferred to his fellow Republican leaders Trent Lott and Dick Armey, preached common ground, and counseled that any investigations of the president should proceed "very carefully and very systematically and without breaking up the sense of bipartisanship." This kinder, gentler approach could prompt Gingrich's House adversaries, ranging from David Bonior to Pete King, to go a little easier on him in the months ahead. Could, but probably won't. ♦

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Lenin's Tomb with a View

by Arnold Beichman

Some three decades ago, Yevgeny Yevtushenko published a poem titled "Stalin's Heirs." It was a plea to the leadership of the Soviet Union to prevent the return of Stalinism. At the time, the embalmed corpse of Stalin—once displayed in the Red Square Mausoleum alongside Lenin's—had been transferred to the Kremlin wall. Despite this deeply important act, there was growing alarm in the country that Stalin's spirit was alive and resurgent. Yevtushenko's poem expressed it well:

And I, appealing to our government, petition them to double, and treble,
the sentries guarding this slab, and stop Stalin from ever rising again,
and with Stalin, the past . . .

And his conclusion:

While Stalin's heirs still walk this earth,
Stalin, I fancy, still lurks in the mausoleum.

So it is now time to ask, Why is *Lenin* still there, lying in state in his air-conditioned shrine? When Khrushchev in 1961 ordered Stalin out of Lenin's tomb, his implication was that Lenin was still and always sacred. This was understandable: Lenin was communism's founder, and Khrushchev and his government were Communist. Mao Zedong's mummy reposes in Tiananmen Square, and why not? China's rulers are Communist. But the president of the new Russia, Boris Yeltsin, is not a Communist. In fact, he was almost overthrown by a Communist conspiracy three years ago. Yet Lenin continues to lie in his glass sarcophagus.

It is true that Yeltsin has put an end to round-the-clock military pageantry, complete with goose-stepping; now, a police guard lazes around the squat, reddish vault. But if Lenin and Leninism have lost their importance in Russian political thought, if their memory has been abominated, then the man himself should be taken to some cemetery far away, in a symbolic act of desecration.

Imagine that a provincial government in Germany (Bavaria, for example) announced the opening of a Hitler tomb. Imagine that people lined up daily to view a wax-museum replica of the founder of Nazism, lying in state. Western public opinion would be outraged. Any time a skinhead throws a firebomb into a tenement occupied by Turkish immigrants; any time a Holocaust-denier gets a tract published; any time a rightist party gets a big vote in Austria, a wave of apprehension about Hitler's heirs ensues. But the Bolshevik who brought so much misery to so many and wrought a proto-Stalinism ("proto" only because Lenin died in 1924) is still an object of veneration. Is Lenin morally superior to Hitler?

A few years ago, it was reported that Yeltsin would order Lenin's remains to be buried in the Volkovo cemetery in St. Petersburg. Furthermore, it was said, he would relieve the Kremlin wall of some of its illustrious bones: Stalin's, Brezhnev's, Andropov's, Chernenko's—they would go to the Novodevichie cemetery in Moscow, or elsewhere, if the families so requested.

But nothing happened. Instead, with the onset of the presidential campaign earlier this year and the remarkable strength of Communist candidate Gennady Zyuganov, Yeltsin, the *Financial Times* reported, "embraced the symbols and ceremonies of the Soviet era as he stepped up his campaign for election." On May 9, Yeltsin commemorated the anniversary of victory in World War II with a speech delivered from atop the Red Square Mausoleum. A red flag—with a star substituting for the old hammer and sickle—waved in the breeze. And not to be forgotten is that the Duma, Russia's parliament, has passed a resolution calling for the reconstitution of the USSR.

If one thing is clear at this point about Soviet history, it is that Lenin was a ghastly, inhuman revolutionary prepared to impose on Russia and all the world his messianic totalitarianism. Those in doubt need only consult hitherto secret documents recently published in *The Unknown Lenin* (Yale University Press). As for the corpse, the late Dmitri Volkogonov, a biographer of Lenin who had full access to the Lenin archive, writes:

> An entire mechanism was put in place to manage Lenin's embalmed body, which had become vitally necessary . . . for its effect on the psychology of the masses. For the Bolsheviks it was one means of personifying the immortality of Lenin's precepts, although on the eve of the 21st century, rather than serving as a testimony of the man's greatness, it is instead a reminder of the depth of the country's historic failure.

If Leninism were not a latent ideological force in Russia, Lenin's body, like Stalin's, would have been removed from that tomb years ago. Perhaps it is time for Yevtushenko to give us another poem—on the dangers of Lenin's heirs.

***Arnold Beichman is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution and a columnist for the* Washington Times.**

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THE HUNGER ARTISTS

By Nicholas Eberstadt

There is scarcely a nobler quest in the world than the search for solutions to the continuing tragedies of starvation and famine. But perhaps in no other humanitarian venture do people so mistake good intentions for good policy. The subject of world hunger can cause the vision of ordinarily brilliant intellectuals, learned academicians, and clear-headed statesmen suddenly to blur. All around the world, specialists and policymakers continue to entertain beliefs and accept premises about the world food situation that are demonstrably, often glaringly, invalid. And, therefore, life-threatening.

To a strange and disturbing degree, modern international man is, quite literally, starved for ideas. Widely accepted misconceptions, stubborn *idées fixes* and crude ideological notions about the nature of hunger and famine in the modern world are impeding the quest to achieve food security for all. Guided—or more exactly, misguided—by fundamentally flawed assessments of the prevalence and causes of global hunger, we cannot hope to attain satisfactory results. At best, our well-meaning efforts will be merely ineffective; at worst, we risk making bad conditions worse, and injuring our intended beneficiaries.

Modern-day myths about the world food problem are legion. And there are three such myths in the air today that are particularly fashionable, and particularly pernicious. The first concerns the current dimensions of the hunger problem. The second might be described as the "Malthusian specter." The third bears on the relationship between hunger and political morality in the modern world.

I

According to a large body of major studies by reputable and authoritative organizations, the magnitude of the global malnutrition problem in the modern era is vast—so vast as to be almost incomprehensible. According to some of these studies, moreover, the problem has been worsening over time.

In 1950, Lord Boyd-Orr, the first director general of the U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), warned that "a lifetime of malnutrition and actual hunger is the lot of at least two-thirds of mankind." Thirty years later, a United States Presidential Commission on World Hunger concluded that "this world hunger problem is getting worse rather than better. There are more hungry people than ever before." In 1991, the U.N. World Food Council declared that "the number of chronically hungry people in the world continues to grow." And at the World Food Summit held last week in Rome, an official document put the undernourished population of the world at well over 800 million. That figure suggests that one out of five persons from developing countries was suffering from chronic undernutrition in the early 1990s.

By such soundings, we would seem to have made no relative progress whatever against Third World hunger over the past generation. And given the growth of population in the less developed regions, the absolute number of hungry people in the world would appear to have increased tremendously in recent decades.

A distressing and disheartening picture, no doubt. But there is one small thing wrong with this picture: It is empirically false. Astonishing as it may sound to the non-specialist, *every major international study that has attempted to quantify global hunger over the past two generations is demonstrably and deeply flawed.*

Using the methods employed in any one of these studies, it would be impossible to derive an accurate impression of the global hunger situation. And the conditions under which some of the studies were prepared were far from ideal. For citizens and policymakers committed to charting a course against world hunger, these studies offer a distorted and misleading map.

The flaws are sometimes quite technical, but they are never difficult to describe. In every instance, they are due to questionable and unsupported assumptions about individual nutritional needs in large populations, and equally questionable assumptions about the correspondence between national

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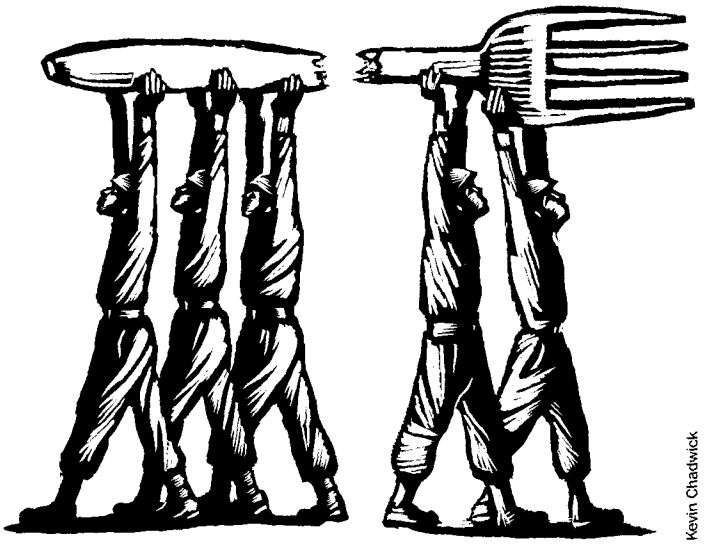
food supplies and individual food intake.

Malnutrition is an affliction suffered by individuals. Short of clinical or biomedical examination, there is no reliable way to determine a person's health or nutritional status. Because they lack this person-by-person information, these studies draw clumsy inferences about individual well-being. They cannot cope with such exacting, but important, issues as whether individuals with lower caloric intake have lower than average caloric requirements; whether individual metabolic efficiency adjusts in response to changes in the nutritional supply; or whether individuals predicted by their models to be undernourished actually suffer from identifiable nutritional afflictions. To pose these questions is not to presuppose an answer to them; it is simply to discharge a basic duty of careful inquiry.

Sometimes the results of these hunger studies can be dismissed after even the most casual inspection. In 1980, the World Bank published a paper purporting to show that three-fourths of the population of the less developed regions suffered from "caloric deficits." This ominous conclusion was reached by a chain of dubious suppositions, the final and most spectacular of which was that anyone receiving less than the average "recommended dietary allowance" was underfed. In truth, about half of any population will need less than the average allowance; that is the meaning of the word "average." Consequently, this model could only generate nonsense numbers: Its computations suggested, among other things, that nearly half the people in prosperous Hong Kong were getting too little food!

To their credit, the World Bank researchers on this particular project recognized that their work failed the "reality test" and went back to the drawing board to improve their product. Unfortunately, others working on the problem have not always met the same standards of intellectual accountability. Lord Boyd-Orr, for example, did not at the time explain the method underlying his now-famous estimate of the prevalence of world hunger. After reviewing contemporary data, one of the leading agricultural experts of the day, Merrill K. Bennett, surmised that this estimate might actually be an elementary computational mistake—a misreading of the figures in two particular columns of a particular table. The Food and Agricultural Organization, which prepared the figures Lord Boyd-Orr used, never replied to Bennett's inquiry and has never offered substantiating evidence for Boyd-Orr's assertion.

Other estimates about world hunger from the same organization have remained similarly protected against outside inspection: Most of the data and calculations in the first three FAO World Food Surveys, for example, are still unavailable to the public. In its more recent studies, the organization's determination of the number of calories an individual needs for nourishment has been rising steadily over time. Why? These upward revisions do not seem to reflect any obvious changes in the scientific consensus concerning nutritional norms. But they do produce higher totals for any given estimate of the number of hungry people in the world.



Kevin Chadwick

If we could only for a moment extricate ourselves from this numerical house of mirrors, we would see that there are indeed meaningful data that bear upon the actual nutritional status of humanity, and that they tell a rather different story.

Household spending patterns in less developed regions, for example, can reveal how the poor assess *their own* nutritional status. If a family treats food as a "superior good"—that is to say, if an increase in income raises the overall share of the household budget going to food—it renders a telling judgment that its members have had too little to eat. By this criterion, the incidence of serious hunger in the world would be far lower than the Food and Agricultural Organization currently suggests: about two-thirds lower in some years for India, to take one example.

Mortality rates, for their part, offer a direct and unambiguous measure of the material condition of any population. It is clear that the so-called Third World

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has experienced a revolution in health conditions over the past generation. According to the U.N. Secretariat, life expectancy at birth there rose by an average of almost a decade and a half between the early 1960s and the early 1990s. And over that same period, infant mortality there is estimated to have dropped nearly by half. Can one really imagine that such dramatic gains were entirely unaccompanied by nutritional progress?

The truth is that a precise and reliable method for estimating the incidence and severity of worldwide malnutrition has yet to be devised. We can be all too sure that scores of millions in our world suffer from heart-rending, life-impairing hunger. But exaggerating the current scope of the problem, and minimizing the strides we have already made against it, will serve no worthy purpose. Hungry populations certainly do not benefit from such misapprehensions. In an age of "compassion fatigue," these misrepresentations of reality tend instead to discourage action by depicting the problem as almost insurmountably large. And to make matters worse, they may direct available humanitarian resources away from the places where they might have made the biggest difference.

II

Let us turn now to the Malthusian specter. The postwar variant of the worldview first advanced by

THE U.N.'S FOOD FIGHT

by Dave Juday

FOR FIVE DAYS LAST WEEK, the politics of food, population, and the environment was played out in Rome. The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), a branch of the United Nations, convened a World Food Summit. It was rather like a sequel to the 1994's U.N. Population Conference, held in Cairo. Tales of apocalypse and planetary devastation abounded. Fiction was the order of the day.

In the Third World, the rate of population growth has been decreasing for nearly 30 years. And there is no evidence to suggest imminent famine. On the contrary, calories available to the average Third World resident have risen by about a third since 1960. Diets have improved, also: There have been increases of about 60 percent in vegetable-oil consumption and about 50 percent in animal-based protein (e.g., milk, meat, eggs, and cheese). What famines we have seen in recent decades have been more a matter of abhorrent politics than of food production.

In all, we are feeding twice as many people around the globe today as in 1960—and, again, feeding them better. And we are doing it with the same 6 million square miles of cropland that farmers used in 1960. How so? The "Green Revolution" produced advances in fertilizers, pesticides, and seed genetics, which resulted in higher crop yields. Without these higher yields, we would be cropping from 12 million to 18 million square miles of land (equivalent to the entire continent of Africa) with severe environmental and land-use consequences.

Strangely, however, the FAO has never really conceded the importance of high-yield farming. It virtually ignored the Green Revolution during the 1970s. Instead, it was hip-deep in the cartel game, trying to suppress gains in farm productivity. Today, the FAO still works to control supply—this time in the name of environmentalism.

"Sustainable agriculture" is all the rage now, the politically correct term for farming without benefit of chemicals. This is a practice that, its name notwithstanding, can neither preserve the environment nor feed people. It simply reduces crop yields, meaning that more land must be used to keep production the same. And because additional farmland is unlikely to come from the razing of urban areas, a large-scale adoption of "organic" techniques to nourish coming generations would certainly mean the loss of wildlife habitat—as much as 20 million to 30 million square miles, or an area the size of the Americas and Europe combined.

Therefore, it is unsurprising that environmentalists are pursuing population control with new vigor. As Jane Fonda put it in her role as President Clinton's "goodwill ambassador" to the U.N. Population Fund, "The controversy around contraception and abortion made it politically easier to speak and organize around air pollution, deforestation, toxic waste, and biodiversity while ignoring the role our own burgeoning species plays in all of this." But, *pace* Ms. Fonda, the real problem

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the 19th-century economist Thomas Malthus holds that the globe cannot support the ongoing and enormous increase in human numbers that we are witnessing. It predicts that we will be faced by rising poverty, mass hunger, or perhaps even worldwide catastrophe unless we somehow check this uncontrolled demographic growth. Overpopulation, increasing scarcity of food and natural resources, and famine, Malthusians argue, are clear and present dangers—the existence of which, they say, validates their conception of how the world works.

In intellectual and political circles, the influence of Malthusian ideology today ranges wide and deep; not surprisingly, it is especially evident in deliberations about the world food outlook. For its proponents, Malthusianism has some of the trappings of a secular faith. Matters of faith, as we know, do not readily lend themselves to empirical tests, or to disproof. If we try to treat the Malthusian specter as a factual rather than a theological proposition, though, we will find little evidence that its advent is nigh.

Consider the problem of "overpopulation." So much has been said about this problem over the years that it may surprise you to learn there is no strict demographic definition of the word. None.

How would we define it? In terms of population density? If so, Bermuda would be more overpopulated than Bangladesh. In terms of rates of "natural

lies not with overpopulation, but rather with environmentalism's self-defeating opposition to chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

A call for population control is a logical extension of the environmentalist belief (or claim) that pesticides are, by definition, harmful. But the National Academy of Sciences begs to differ: Its research arm has just released a two-year report that reaffirms a long-known truth: The proper use of pesticides poses no threat. The report goes so far as to state that "it is plausible that naturally occurring chemicals present in food pose a greater cancer risk than synthetic chemicals."

Even so, bogus propaganda about agricultural chemicals persists. And the anti-pesticide and other enthusiasms have sparked a powerful, far-reaching political effort. Warren Christopher, the outgoing secretary of state, recently announced that U.S. foreign policy will include environmentalist-inspired initiatives like a U.N. push for wider pesticide bans. Timothy Wirth, undersecretary of state for global affairs, worried during pre-Rome hearings that population growth is "a long-term prospect which is indeed very daunting" (despite the fact that growth rates are slowing). President Clinton himself, in an address to the U.N. General Assembly, declared, "To ensure a healthier and more abundant world, we simply must slow the world's explosive growth in population."

So environmentalism has moved beyond concern over chemicals to alarmism about human reproduction—in non-Western cultures especially. Which returns us to the food summit and its misdirected, if not scandalous, population-control thrust: Whether or not the world becomes more populous, we still must have high-yield farming, and more of it.

Without such farming, the danger we face is not overpopulation or famine—it is the loss of critical wildlife habitat. India, for example, has begun to take one-third of its dairy-cattle fodder from its forests, thereby robbing biodiversity. Indonesia is clearing tropical forest to grow low-yielding soybeans for chicken feed; it also plans to drain one of the world's largest freshwater wetlands for rice production. Fragile tropical-forest land, when assailed by "sustainable agriculture," suffers as much as ten times the soil erosion of the average American farm.

To satisfy the world's food demand in the next century, we must rely primarily on two things: enlightened farming and liberal trade policies (fertile cropland being unevenly distributed and nutritional self-sufficiency eluding many nations). Environmentalists, though, tend to oppose broader trade as detrimental to traditional farmers, and their hostility to high-yield innovation is unrelenting—even though such innovation is necessary to spare environmentally sensitive land.

It is amazing but true: The environmental movement's very own agenda stands as a threat to the earth's ecology. And squeals about population at Roman conclaves are no more than diversions from that fact.

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increase"? In that case, pre-Revolutionary America would have been more overpopulated than contemporary Haiti. In terms of the "dependency ratio" of children and the elderly to working-age populations? That would mean Canada was more overpopulated in 1965 than India is today!

If "overpopulation" is a problem, it is a problem that has been misidentified and misdefined. The images evoked by the term—hungry children; squalid housing; early death—speak to problems all too real in the modern world. But these are properly described as problems of *poverty*. The risk of poverty, however, is obviously influenced—indeed, is principally determined—by a panoply of non-demographic forces, not the least of these being the impact of a government's policies on its subjects or citizens. As for the particulars of the relationship between population growth and poverty, they are more complex and far less categorical than one is often led to suppose.

At the very least, we know for a fact that rapid and sustained population growth does not preclude rapid and sustained economic and social advance. If it did, the vast material transformation we have already witnessed this century could not have occurred.

In the past 96 years, the world's population has more than tripled. Never before had such an increase taken place in so brief a time, and although the tempo of global population growth appears to have peaked and to be declining, it is still proceeding with extraordinary speed by historical perspective. This unprecedented demographic explosion, however, did not consign humanity to penury and destitution. Just the opposite. It was accompanied by a worldwide explosion of prosperity.

According to the eminent economist Angus Maddison, the world's per capita GDP quadrupled between the turn of the century and the early 1990s. In Latin America and the Caribbean, per capita GDP has more than quadrupled. In Asia and the Pacific, it has more than quintupled. Even in troubled Africa, it may have more than doubled. While such calculations cannot be exact, there should not be the slightest doubt about the consequence of the trends they represent.

Why has the most rapid period of population growth in the history of our species been the occasion for the most extraordinary economic expansion in human experience? Part of the answer may lie in the "population explosion" itself. It was sparked not because people suddenly started breeding like rabbits, but rather because they stopped dying like flies. Fertility rates didn't soar; mortality rates plummeted. Since the start of our century, the average life expectancy at birth for a human being has probably doubled, and may have more than doubled. Every corner of the earth has joined in this health revolution—and incidentally, this progress has been more dramatic in the less developed regions than in the more affluent ones.

Improvements in health are conducive to improvements in productivity. It is not just that healthier populations are able to work harder: Improvements in health and reductions in mortality enhance the potentialities of what economists call "human capital": education, training, skills, and the like. By so doing, they significantly relieve constraints against attaining higher levels of per capita output.

And why, for that matter, is there such alarm about fertility? Many influential voices today take it as axiomatic that fertility is "excessive" in one or another region of the world. But unlike better health and longer life, which are universally regarded as desirable, there is no universal view on optimal family size. The number of children that parents wish to have, like other big decisions in life, is an inescapably subjective choice. While it may surely be shaped by economic, cultural, or religious factors, in the final analysis it is a personal choice. Before we speak of "excess fertility," we should ponder what we imply by questioning other people's choices about family size. Human beings are not heedless beasts. They do not procreate with utter disregard for their own well-being, much less the welfare of their own children.

With the tremendous growth of human numbers, and of per capita output, the world's GDP has grown phenomenally in our century: Maddison's research suggests a fourteen-fold rise. Despite this awesome surge in demand, however, the prices for foodstuffs and natural resources have not rocketed skywards. In fact, the long-term trend for primary commodity prices has been heading in exactly the opposite direction. According to a careful World Bank study, for example, inflation-adjusted prices for primary commodities dropped by over a third between the turn of the century and the 1980s—and those prices have continued to fall.

Scarce items are supposed to cost more; plentiful items less. So it would appear that foodstuffs and natural resources have been growing *less* scarce, not more scarce, despite mankind's steadily increasing demand for them! For convinced Malthusians, this fact constitutes an unsolved mystery—and indeed an unsolvable one, if they are to maintain faith in their doctrine.

And what of famine? Malthusians expect famines to strike what they call "overpopulated" regions—what we might call very poor regions. It is surely true that the margin for error for the very poor is perilously thin. But it does not follow that the very poor in the

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modern world are inexorably consigned to mass starvation, or that they are pushed there by their own fertility trends. In truth, modern famines are a quintessentially political phenomenon. In our time, people starve *en masse* not because famine is unavoidable. They starve because their own rulers happen to be indifferent to their plight—or because the state has actively contrived to bring about their death.

Recall the most fearsome famines that have gripped nations in our century. More than 6 million people perished in the Ukraine in 1933. That was Stalin's terror-famine: It was provoked by a deliberately punitive collectivization of agriculture, designed to subjugate an unwilling people. As many as 3 million people died in Bengal, India, in 1943. That was when the British Viceregency, with available stocks of grain at hand, refused to enact the empire's stipulated relief procedures, lest those somehow compromise the overall war effort. Between 1959 and 1961, China lost as many as 30 million people through abnormally high death rates. That was Mao's cruel utopian experiment: After his forcible collectivization of the countryside shattered the nation's agriculture, his government denied there was a hunger problem, refused foreign help, and made a point of exporting food. Perhaps a million Biafrans perished from famine in the late 1960s. That was the Nigerian civil war, when food blockades were consciously employed literally to starve the rebels into submission. In the late 1970s, perhaps a million, maybe more, died from abnormal mortality in Cambodia. That was the Khmer Rouge's methodical and barbaric program of auto-genocide. In the 1980s and 1990s, famine has stricken Ethiopia, Sudan, and Somalia. If the details of these more recent tragedies differ in some specifics from the earlier famines I have mentioned, the patterns are unmistakably the same.

Amartya Sen, perhaps the preeminent student of contemporary famine, has stated it starkly: "Famines are, in fact, extremely easy to prevent. It is amazing that they actually take place, because they require a severe indifference on the part of the government."

Famine is now caused not by an ominous excess of people, but instead by a frightening surfeit of callous rulers and killer states. Malthusian delusions would distract us from this central and gruesome fact, just as they divert us from probing too deeply into the reasons that some countries have experienced persistently poor economic performance, or even economic retrogression, in an age of global economic advance.

III

Most important is the relationship between hunger and political morality. In the world of international organizations that deal with hunger, it is regarded as *déclassé* to observe that one form of national political or legal arrangements might be preferable to others manifest elsewhere in the world. To the

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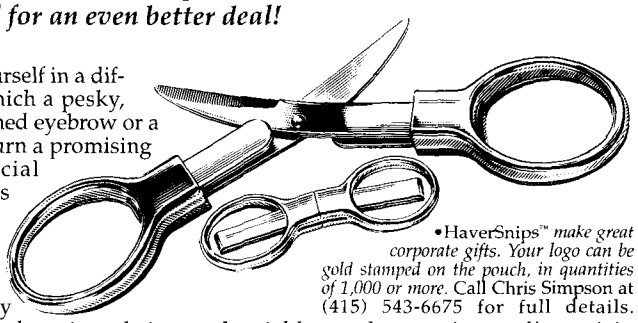

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Morality and High-Tech

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urbane, such a view sometimes sounds embarrassingly provincial. Many still argue that such considerations have no bearing on the pragmatic quest to conquer hunger. They would agree with Bertolt Brecht's admonition: "Food first, morality after."

Brecht's worldly dictum is at once cynical and appallingly naive. How can we reflect upon the history of our century without being struck by the singular role certain political principles have played in abetting mankind's escape from hunger—and the dark role of other political philosophies in perpetuating the threat of hunger and starvation? At the end of the day, this much is crystal clear: Liberty is the enemy of hunger, and freedom is the nemesis of famine.

"In the gruesome history of famines," Amartya Sen has written, "there is hardly any case in which a famine has occurred in a country that is independent and democratic, regardless of whether it is rich or poor."

We can take this point further. There are practically no instances of famine in any setting where local newspapers were free to criticize their own government, or where citizens enjoyed the substantive right to participate in an opposition party. In open and accountable political systems where governments serve at the sufferance of the voter, there is tremendous pressure and incentive for policies that forestall famine. Impoverished as it is often said to be, India has not suffered famine since its independence in 1947. Far from being a luxury that only the rich can afford, as some would have it, political freedom is thus actually a necessity for the very poor.

Marxist-Leninists have sneered at the liberal conception of political freedom; they still dismiss it as a dangerous illusion. But as the nightmare of totalitarianism at last begins to pass, and its legacy of worldwide wreckage is finally laid bare, there can be no more dispute about just who was entranced by perilous political fantasies.

For all their proclamations about enshrining "people's rights," Marxist-Leninist regimes were never able to divide those vaunted rights into individual portions. And while terrible atrocities were committed in our time by regimes of many political hues, only the totalitarians committed atrocities out of cold-blooded principle.

Just as political liberties place a systemic check on the threat of famine, so economic liberties can dynamically reduce the risk of severe malnutrition. This is so because the institutional framework for securing economic liberties happens also to be broadly conducive to material advance, productivity improvement, and, ultimately, the escape from poverty. Rule of law; protection of individual rights, including property rights; enforceability of contracts; sound money; the sanction of mutually beneficial economic exchange: From the standpoint of protecting liberty, all these things are virtues in their own right. But the underpinnings of economic liberty also have a pragmatic value: They stimulate economic activity and enhance economic welfare.

One may also make the case that economic liberty is *especially* important to the poor, the vulnerable, and the marginalized—those groups least capable of fending for themselves in an economic and political system that is neither regular nor just.

In much of the world, including areas where basic political freedoms are secure, the ordinary workings of domestic and international markets are today regarded with suspicion, even hostility, by many elites. They speak gravely of the perils of "market failure" and claim these perils justify far-reaching interventions into economic life. Truth to tell, markets, like all human inventions, *are* imperfect. Some specific instances of modern "market failure," moreover, have been conspicuous. But before learning all the fascinating exceptions to the rules, it is best to get the rules themselves straight. For it is the opportunities that lie in market development, and under a regimen of economic liberty, that offer the greatest inherent scope for improving the purchasing power of the world's poor, for stabilizing their access to food supplies, and thus for promoting nutritional security for vulnerable populations.

The phenomenon Deepak Lal has termed "the *dirigiste* dogma" is still deeply entrenched in many of the world's poorest, and hungriest, spots. Adherents of the *dirigiste* dogma have an unsettling tendency to discover "market failures" where none in fact exist, and to misdiagnose the adverse consequences of their own preferred therapies as "market failures" that will only be remedied through further *dirigiste* treatments. To belabor the obvious once more, such a state of affairs does not relieve the plight of the world's poor or expedite progress against global hunger.

IV

As we look toward the coming century, we have more than a presentiment of some of the challenges that will face us. With the enormous increases in world population anticipated in the coming generations, we will need to arrange for commensurately enormous increases in agricultural production capabilities—or disproportionately enormous increases, if we hope to improve the world's dietary quality. And in

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the world's hungriest regions, establishing effective, responsive, and limited governance is a task barely begun.

That will be the hard work. Fixing these misconceptions about hunger and nutrition is far easier. But one principle, and only one, should be guiding those, both international officials and well-meaning individuals, who seek to address the problem of world hunger. It is as old as the desire to do good itself: First, do no harm. *First, do no harm.* ♦

THE BROKEN ARC:
A Wake-Up Call for the GOP

By Tod Lindberg

Republicans are in a pretty good mood these days in spite of Bob Dole's loss. Their party successfully preserved its majority in Congress despite an expensive and wildly deceptive Democratic onslaught against Newt Gingrich, Republican freshmen, and GOP efforts on Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environment.

Conservative Republicans are especially pleased with the way the election has led to what the Christian Coalition's political director has called "philosophical upgrades" in Congress. Take the Senate. Retiring GOP moderates Mark Hatfield and Alan Simpson were replaced by the more conservative Gordon Smith and Mike Enzi. And "conservative" is the word to describe the three Republicans who picked up Senate seats formerly held by Democrats. Moreover, the one Democrat who unseated a Republican—pro-choice Republican Larry Pressler in South Dakota, to be exact—is pro-life. In the House, the Republican membership has taken on a slightly more conservative cast. While moderate Republicans lost seats, right-wing Republicans increased in number.

REPUBLICANS HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO FEEL HAPPY THEY HELD CONGRESS, BUT THEY OUGHT TO TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT WHERE THEY WON—AND LOST.

The GOP is smacking its lips in anticipation of the next congressional elections in 1998. That will be Clinton's sixth year in office. History shows that the party controlling the White House gets eviscerated in the congressional races held during a president's sixth year. Could Republicans end up after Election Day 1998 with 60 seats in the Senate (the magic number that makes it impossible for Democrats to filibuster GOP legislation)? Perhaps 30 more House seats? It's not out of the question. Huzzah!

Republicans have every right to feel happy with the way the party survived in the House and increased its majority in the Senate. But before the triumphalism gets entirely out of hand, we ought to take a long, hard look at the contours of the 1996 results, especially for the House. What's there ought to give real pause.

It's worth remembering that a year ago, Republicans seemed to have everything going for them. Many more Democrats were deciding to retire from Congress than Republicans (it's no fun being in the minority). This, in turn, gave the GOP a real chance to pick up seats in 1996. Why? Because it's always easier to win an open seat than to beat an incumbent—especially when many of the seats vacated by Democrats were in districts that had shown Republican tendencies in past presidential elections. By contrast, retiring Republicans mostly served in reliably Republican districts, making it especially difficult for Democrats to win these vacancies.

Republicans did indeed do well in the open Democratic seats—they won ten, while the Democrats won only three. But Democrats did something much harder: They beat incumbents. Democrats knocked out 18 sitting Republican members, compared to three such victories in the GOP.

Tod Lindberg, whose work appears regularly in these pages, is editorial-page editor of the Washington Times.

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Doug Stevens

That is not good news for Republicans, and the news gets worse. For if GOP losses had been scattered uniformly across the nation, there wouldn't be anything that remarkable about the 1996 outcome. But the losses weren't scattered. Instead, they followed a fascinating, and worrisome, pattern—a pattern that looked like a broken arc.

There were two separate elections in 1996.Election #1 took place in the South, the Great Plains, and the West. The GOP won it decisively. The Republican party held all but three of its incumbents and picked up 13 seats previously held by Democrats. (The Democrats took one seat in Louisiana and two in North Carolina.)

Election #2 took place in a long, continent-wide curve—a broken arc. The arc went from California up the west coast, where it broke off. It resumed in the northern plains and went from there to the Rust Belt, then to the Northeast, and finally down to the mid-Atlantic. The Democrats won Election #2 decisively: They picked up 22 seats formerly held by Republicans, thus wiping out about one-tenth of the GOP holdings in the 104th Congress. The only Republican pickup in the arc was a lone House seat in Illinois—the seat vacated by Dick Durbin, who ran for the Senate and won. The Republican gains in Election #1 offset the party's losses in Election #2 enough to retain a majority in the House. But the losses in Election #2 are geographically ominous ones.

So were the results in the close races—those won by a margin of six percentage points or less. Any incumbent who wins so narrowly becomes a tempting target in the next election. Nationwide, only seven Democratic incumbents found themselves in close races. That's compared with *37* Republicans. Nineteen of those Republicans won—and 14 of them were in the broken arc. Given how inhospitable the broken arc was to Republicans in this election, every one of those 14 reelected incumbents may find himself in trouble come 1998.

Why has this geographical pattern emerged? The answer may be nothing more than that Bill Clinton actually had some coattails—the president did indeed win big in most states in the arc. If that is true, Republicans may take comfort; there will be no such coattails in 1998.

But what if something deeper is going on? Is there something about the increasingly southern and western character of the GOP that is chasing away voters who live in the arc? If so, that could be catastrophic for the Republican party. Republicans have done so well in the South and West that they may not have much

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more to gain in these areas, which are less densely populated than most of the states in the broken arc. Let us say the arc really has become inhospitable territory for Republicans, and they lose another 20 seats in the arc in 1998 (we know this is possible, considering the vulnerable incumbents there). The GOP may not be able to *find* ten seats in the South and West to offset those losses. And this is to say nothing of the election in the year 2000, and the one after that, and the one after that.

What happened in the arc? If you asked a liberal what the trouble was, he would surely answer, "God, gays, and guns." In other words, the Republican party is too much the creature of the religious Right, is too intolerant, and panders too much to the National Rifle Association. But those are the very reasons for recent GOP successes in the South and West, according to some GOP analysts.

A pragmatist would split the difference between them. If "God, gays, and guns" dominates the Republican message nationwide, even in states that don't want to hear it, that's bad for the whole party. People in other states don't want to talk about abortion; they prefer to hear about balancing the budget and deregulation. After all, managing a coalition like the GOP means that the various needs of its constituent groups must be met in such a way that the result is a net gain for all. If some members are causing net losses, it's time to rethink. Maybe there's a way to mix and match the Republican message.

The problem is that kind of candidate the pragmatist would love really didn't do well this year—a candidate who is conservative on economic issues but is pro-choice, willing to vote for the Brady bill, secular, and tolerant of other lifestyle choices. Two such candidates lost high-profile Senate races—William Weld in Massachusetts and Dick Zimmer in New Jersey. Meanwhile, Sen. Bob Smith pulled off his own reelection in New Hampshire thanks in part to the last-minute efforts of the Christian Coalition and the NRA—this in a state that also went big for Clinton. Nor were all the GOP House casualties fire-breathing revolutionaries.

So the Republican collapse in the arc may not be because of "God, gays, and guns." Rather, it may be because Democrats found a way to connect with these voters by talk about the kinds of subjects "God, gays, and guns" are meant to address. Maybe people voted Democratic not because they hated Republicans but because they actually liked a new message they were hearing from Democratic candidates. Many of them, from the president on down, sounded values-type themes—protecting children (family values), more cops (law and order), school uniforms (discipline), and so on. Talking about these issues is a world away from advocating universal health insurance and economic stimulus packages. The GOP wanted people to believe the Democrats were liberals in disguise, but didn't succeed in proving the charge with voters. It takes a conservative ideologue—and I am one, at least intermittently—to ascribe these Democratic themes solely to the party's need for protective cover.

Therein lies another possible explanation for the trouble in the arc, one we might call the "Newt effect." I am not referring to the effort to portray the House speaker as a symbol of dangerous extremism, but rather to his ideological rigor—shared by most Republican freshmen and others in the party—and the effect it might have had on the election.

The chief characteristic of such ideological rigor is that those who use it believe it reveals to them the answers to all important questions. For them, politics is just a matter of implementation. But most people do not think in ideological terms and are confused and offended by grand theories like the Third Wave (Gingrich's) and libertarianism (Dick Armey's). Gingrich and his troops put their conservative ideology on parade during the 104th Congress, and that may have proved as off-putting as naked liberal ideology has been in the past—not because of its content, but because of the certitude and insistence of those propounding it. The Republican realignment of 1994 has endured, but it may have contained the seeds of its own reversal. It may be that Democrats have learned from it and may gain from it in ways Gingrich (and many of us) never expected.

Election night 1996 might have gone a different way. The Democratic administration might have collapsed, the Republican presidential nominee might have crushed Bill Clinton, Republicans might have continued making gains throughout the country as they did in 1994, and Americans, grateful for the GOP's success in protecting and preserving Medicare, might have stood and applauded as the Republican government proceeded to enact a flat tax and privatize Social Security. But it didn't work out that way.

Instead, the Democrats fought back, vigorously. And they have much to show for their efforts, including the broken arc. Democrats will be studying their gains in the arc, as well as the potential limits to GOP expansion in the South and West. And since they are not and probably never will be in a surrendering frame of mind, they will conclude, quite rightly, that they have opportunities. How much they are able to make of them will depend, in part, on how complacent the GOP is. ♦

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How Republicans Lost the Education Issue

By Chester E. Finn, Jr.

That the education issue was weakening GOP electoral prospects became clear the day a *New York Times*-CBS poll reported it was top priority among undecided voters—and that twice as many Americans trusted the Democrats with it. And it's been no solace to learn from exit polls that Bill Clinton's education stance helped him lock up women's votes on Election Day.

The country has come a long way from the days when Ronald Reagan and William J. Bennett were the nation's education truth-tellers, when Democrats were part of the problem and GOP governors like Lamar Alexander and Tom Kean offered solutions. And the distance we have traveled has not been good for Republicans—or, one might add, for American schoolchildren, who are learning as little today as when the nation was declared "at risk" by a blue-ribbon commission in 1983.

Yet education remains a natural issue for the GOP because of the split between the interests of its "producers"—teachers' unions, sure, but also ed schools, superintendents' associations, textbook publishers, etc.—and those of its "consumers": students, parents, employers, and taxpayers. As long as Democrats stay joined at the hip to the education producers, Republicans should be the champions of education's far more numerous consumers—50 million schoolchildren and their families, for starters.

Consider testing. The producers want it complex, infrequent, done by the school system itself, reported in opaque terms ("Your child is in the second stanine . . ."), and above all unmoored to any consequences for themselves. The principal's tenure must not be affected by his students' achievements, nor should the teacher's pay, nor even the pupil's promotion to the next grade.

Consumers, on the other hand, want testing to be simple, linked to explicit standards, conducted by trustworthy outside auditors, reported in language a parent or employer can understand ("She's in the top 10 percent"), and routinely used for decisions about the fate of staff and students.

Chester E. Finn, Jr. is John M. Olin fellow at the Hudson Institute.

When interests diverge this sharply, when there are so many more consumers than producers, and when the Democrats are irrevocably hitched to the latter, the Republican opportunity is plain.

Yet the opportunity has been squandered. One reason is that the producers are superbly mobilized in an alphabet soup of shrewd, energetic, and rich organizations. The consumers are not really organized at all—and when they appear to be, as in the PTA and various business executives' groups, on closer inspection they turn out to have been co-opted.

Hence the GOP has big trouble wrapping its arms around those millions of education-minded voters. There's no counterpart to the Christian Coalition, the NRA, or the AARP. Absent a ready-made group with juices flowing, any party—or candidate—must tap into the retail concerns of countless individuals. But Republicans haven't been adept at this either. Education leads the parade of issues about which they're far better at saying what they're against than what they're for.

What they're against could fill a high-school gym: teachers' unions, national standards, the federal Education Department, the Goals 2000 program, outcomes-based education, schools of education, federal interference, money wasted on bureaucracy, the government monopoly, whole-language reading, bilingual education, and so forth.

But what are Republicans for? Aside from various "abolitions" and "repeals," all we really know they're for is vouchers. The rest is hazy—the more so because Bill Clinton showed his genius for seizing such obvious prospects as charter schools and uniforms.

Vouchers are a fine thing to favor. They are the very symbol of consumer power, a powerful way to crack the monopoly, and the teachers' unions' worst nightmare. But vouchers are also education's counterpart of abortion: a divisive issue about which most people have strong, fixed opinions and that political opponents can use as a wedge to split single-issue voters from otherwise like-minded allies.

Americans do believe in freedom and choice in schooling, but they also believe in an abstraction called "public education"—and don't take kindly to candidates who seem to be against it. Moreover, those

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who like vouchers best—inner-city minority parents justifiably furious about their kids' public schools—are not natural GOP constituents. Meanwhile, the people most apt to vote Republican—suburban and rural folk—aren't too alarmed by the schools near them (never mind that they should be) and tend to think they've already exercised educational choice by living outside the cities. Nor would many of their children even be eligible for the limited, means-tested vouchers (or scholarships) that have won a measure of political acceptance—they're operational today in Milwaukee and Cleveland—and do not bring down quite so many thunderbolts from editorial writers and the League of Women Voters.

Vouchers, in sum, are dandy policy but less-than-brilliant politics from the GOP perspective. Nor does it help when their staunchest advocates pooh-pooh all other education reforms as placebos that will only delay the revolution.

Being against a lot of things isn't smart, either. Despite three decades of evidence that boosting school budgets and other inputs does not reliably translate into stronger educational results, most Americans still link money with school quality or—at least—associate being "for education" with supporting a bunch of programs and actions that sound as if they must be good for schools and kids.

The electorate is none too sophisticated about all this, and the Democrats have made much hay from its naiveté, slapping seductive labels on often-horrific programs. (The latest big federal abomination was dubbed the "Improving America's Schools Act.") They have successfully branded the GOP as the cheap, anti-education, anti-kid, know-nothing party because Republicans want to stop wasting money on ill-conceived projects. Few GOP standard-bearers have had a convincing explanation for slashing, cutting, even trimming, education spending, and they haven't been able to explain how less can sometimes be more. (Recall the school-lunch debacle.) Bob Dole and Jack Kemp certainly could not explain this during the campaign. Nor could the leadership of the 104th Congress—not least because some key Republican figures (Vermont's Jim Jeffords comes to mind) might as well be Democrats when it comes to education, while the House freshmen, among others, glowed with hostility even to such bona fide government activities as testing.

Dozens of outrages and excesses in the education field could legitimately be laid at the feet of Uncle Sam in general and the Clinton administration in particular. But nobody bothered to find the smoking guns—to explain in detail how the Office for Civil Rights has undermined state standards, how the "regional education laboratories" spend federal dollars to keep their gravy train on track, how bilingual education keeps kids ignorant of English, how federal "special-ed" policy creates bizarre incentives for more kids to be deemed "disabled" and dangerous youngsters to remain in regular classrooms, how charter schools are denied their fair share of federal dollars, and much more. Explaining all this takes plain-English presentations by people who know what they're talking about, and it takes a clear vision of what an alternative might look like. This the Dole-Kemp campaign and the Congress failed at.

Congress actually did worse. After denouncing the Education Department and its programs and getting tarred with the brush of budget-cutting, it wound up appropriating more money for all those old programs than even Bill Clinton had requested. The closing days of the 104th Congress resembled a pork auction as dozens of programs once targeted for oblivion got funded beyond the education establishment's wildest dreams. Americans may be unsophisticated about program details, but they have a keen nose for hypocrisy and inconsistency.

The Republicans who have done the best job of making education sense to the public—explaining what they're for and how the country will be better served if their policies prevail—have been a handful of governors (Engler, Thompson, Weld, Bush, et al.) and former education secretaries Bennett and Alexander. Yet the Dole-Kemp campaign and GOP platform-writers all but ignored the governors when framing policies in this field, as did the 104th Congress.

Nor did targeting the teachers' unions turn out to be a shrewd move, justified though it is on the merits. The National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers are much the strongest defenders of the education status quo and the fiercest foes of serious reforms of every sort.

But to make the case, one must be able to place the evidence before voters—Just how did the unions keep real charter legislation from being enacted in Ohio? in Indiana? in Georgia?—and dangle copies of those hundred-page bargaining contracts that make it impossible to fire incompetent teachers or reward great ones. One must present details of how much money the unions' PACs contributed and to whom. Names of NEA officials who played key roles in the Clinton-Gore campaign must be named. Quotes from the bizarre resolutions passed at their conventions must be cited. Proof that the AFT executive council last summer rejected a serious "teacher quality" initiative proposed by union president Albert Shanker must

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be offered. More specimens of union-generated mischief must become fodder for commercials. Taking on the teachers' unions, in other words, is a big political project, and not just an acceptance-speech sound-bite, as it was for Dole.

Without a major effort, it's easy for teachers to get away with the "he who attacks my union attacks me personally" response we heard so often this year. Since most Americans have a warm feeling toward their own child's teacher, this circling of the union wagons produced a fortified target that Dole could never vanquish.

To sum up, these are the four hard-learned lessons for the GOP from the experiences of the 104th Congress and the recent campaign:

1. Say what you're for, not what you're against—and what you're for is saving public education, not destroying it.

2. Don't hang it all on vouchers.

3. Recognize that the audience is naive—and the opposition plenty shrewd—about what it means to be "for education" but "against the education establishment."

4. Heed those who have had success in this area. ♦

VOTERS V. JUDGES

The Case of the "Stop Juvenile Crime Initiative"

By Andrew Peyton Thomas

Anyone glumly anticipating another four years of Clinton judicial appointments and continued expansion of criminals' rights can find cheer in a little-noticed initiative just adopted in Arizona. Despite a fierce opposition campaign run by injudicious judges and lawyers and abetted by a hostile press, citizens of the Grand Canyon State voted overwhelmingly to require the adult prosecution of certain juvenile offenders and to curb overweening judges.

The initiative was a local response to the wave of juvenile crime that afflicts the whole nation. Between 1989 and 1994, Arizona's juvenile arrest rate for violent crimes rose a staggering 527 percent; for murder alone, it more than doubled. In response to these trends, Gov. Fife Symington and victims' rights advocates launched the Stop Juvenile Crime Initiative, or Proposition 102. The measure proposed that all juveniles age 15 and older who are charged with murder, rape, or armed robbery be prosecuted as adults.

In addition, the initiative proposed an amendment to the state constitution with broad implications. Arizona's constitution, adopted in 1910, vests the courts with "exclusive original jurisdiction" over abused, neglected, and delinquent juveniles. Progressive-era judges were expected to oversee the treatment and rehabilitation of wayward youths.

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While this approach may have made sense back when juvenile crimes were relatively minor and judges were elected, it has given Arizona's latter-day juvenile-court judges, who are mostly appointed, a veto over the transfer of serious juvenile offenders to adult courts. Juveniles not tried as adults must be released from state custody upon turning 18, regardless of their crimes. In numerous and locally notorious cases, Arizona judges, citing the prospects for rehabilitation, have declined to transfer heinous young offenders to adult court.

Prop. 102 revoked the courts' exclusive jurisdiction and allowed the state legislature to make policy for juvenile justice. On Election Day, 63 percent of Arizona voters supported the initiative.

Still, this happy outcome was achieved only after a blistering counteroffensive from judges and lawyers. Press releases and pamphlets denouncing Prop. 102—produced and distributed at taxpayers' expense—were fired off from judges' chambers. Leading the charge was Stanley Feldman, chief justice of the Arizona Supreme Court. Feldman publicly proclaimed the initiative "frightening" and personally orchestrated the campaign to defeat it. When the supreme court heard arguments on whether the initiative should be thrown off the ballot, Feldman's conflict of interest was so glaring that, in an extraordinary step, he recused him-

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self. Facing a popular backlash, the court gingerly declined to assert jurisdiction.

Other judges joined the fray with equal gusto. John Foreman, Maricopa County's presiding juvenile-court judge, was ubiquitous, stumping against the initiative despite the obvious conflict of interest (never noted in the press). As the election approached, his countenance seemed to grow grimmer by the day—which was hardly surprising, given Foreman's philosophy. In a memo to "concerned citizens" earlier this year, he wrote: "The juvenile-justice system properly understood is a mechanism to redress the unequal availability of wealth, good schools, stable families and health care that tends to push minority children toward the juvenile-justice system. Denial of the opportunity for rehabilitation in the juvenile-justice system for those minority children who are amenable to treatment exacerbates the discrimination that they suffer in contemporary society." In other words, juvenile-court judges should shield minority youths from criminal punishment to try to make up for the white racism that forced them into lives of crime.

Even the likes of Foreman, however, could not have engaged in open electioneering as sitting judges without recent, conveniently timed changes to the state's code of judicial ethics. In August, as the opposition's campaign was heating up, the committee of judges who incestuously determine the canons of judicial ethics for Arizona ruled that—presto!—judges could engage in all the activities of politicians without the burden of running for office. As a result, judges could speak at partisan events, raise money, and generally spearhead the opposition's campaign without fear of professional censure.

Still, no less a figure than the very conscience of the county, Judge Foreman, ran afoul of these liberalized rules. In October, he admitted sheepishly to the local press that he had sent an e-mail to county prosecutors—including those who appear in his court—soliciting contributions for the anti-initiative campaign.

Arizona's lawyers, for their part, joined in circling the wagons, for less ideological but equally self-serving reasons. The legal profession underwrote the opposition campaign in a manner befitting one of the state's most powerful special-interest groups.

The bar association recognizes, of course, that greater judicial power is good for its members' business. The more disputes must be settled in court, the more work and income flow attorneys' way. It was with therefore predictable hyperventilation that Michael Kimerer, outgoing president of the Arizona state bar association and a criminal defense attorney, termed the initiative's modest limitations on judges nothing less than "a deliberate and calculated move to destroy the constitutional power of the courts."

In response to Prop. 102, the bar mobilized a well-oiled political machine more typical of a corrupt labor union than a high-minded association of legal professionals. Arizona has an "integrated bar," which means that a lawyer must join the lawyers' guild and pay annual dues in order to practice in the state. Despite a string of recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions barring the use of mandatory dues by unions and state bar associations for political purposes, the Arizona bar voted to donate $20,000 in mandatory dues to the fight against the juvenile-justice initiative. The bar justified this violation of its members' First Amendment liberties by calling the defeat of Prop. 102 essential to the "administration of justice." A Phoenix-area newspaper quoted court officials as saying it was a "demonstrable fact" that the initiative would damage the state's juvenile-justice system. Meanwhile, a drug-legalization measure also on the ballot, which could require the early release of almost 1,000 incarcerated drug offenders, drew nary a penny—or a rebuke—from the state's juridical establishment.

Like the teachers' unions in California, which sank that state's voucher initiative in 1993 with TV commercials warning that covens of witches would soon be running voucher-supported schools, the opposition to Arizona's juvenile-crime initiative took to spreading preposterous falsehoods. One was the contention, first put forth by Chief Justice Feldman, that the initiative would permit the legislature and government agents to round up wholesome youngsters against their parents' wishes with no court hearing. Such a practice is, among other things, forbidden by the due process guarantees in the state and federal constitutions. Nonetheless, the newspapers gave prominent play to this and other outlandish claims.

Yet despite the tsunami of disinformation, the initiative passed. Almost two-thirds of Arizona voters endorsed these overdue reforms. Public trepidation over high juvenile-crime rates undoubtedly concentrated the voters' minds. But there was another, broader civics lesson to be learned from the exercise. Arizonans saw for themselves the danger to society when government's least responsive and arguably most powerful branch is controlled by a single special-interest group—lawyers.

When unelected judges wield their great and solemn powers irresponsibly, the public is liable to rise up and assert its legitimate concern for public safety. Eventually, as Proposition 102 shows, frustrated citizens will organize and lay down the law themselves. ♦

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GORBACHEV IN HELL

By P.J. O'Rourke

New Satan takes over in hell, wants to install air-conditioning. That is *Memoirs* by Mikhail Gorbachev in brief. And brevity is a thing of which you'll have a high, fine appreciation after 769 densely printed, generously sized pages containing, in total, more than 350,000 words. *Memoirs* (Doubleday, $35) is an impressive work—if you drop it on your foot.

Marx spoke of the ash heap of history and here it is. The prose style is appalling: "The need for major changes was in the air, as the saying goes." Perhaps the translator is an idiot. But, "Camp David is a beautiful spot in the woods, designed for recreation, with many a shady nook and sports lawns and buildings," can be blamed on no translator. The third-person voice is used to such Bob Dolerous extent that consciousness of authorship begins to fog. "Many people still suspect Gorbachev of trying to save the Party nomenklatura," appears on the page, and you think, "What witless, purblind pinko sap is writing this?" Then you remember. It's the fellow capable of penning the sentence, "My speech started off like Hamlet's famous soliloquy: 'How to deepen and make irreversible revolutionary perestroika, which on the initiative and under the leadership of the Party has been launched in our country—this is the fundamental question . . .'" To which, if I remember my Shakespeare, Ophelia replies, "Sweet Prince, take your Prozac."

The content of *Memoirs* is, however, far more dreadful than the style. The book is full of lies:

> Democracy can be developed under a one-party system.

> To us, arms negotiations were a method of consolidating the efforts of different states in order to achieve results that would benefit all parties involved.

> I absolutely reject the accusation that the Soviet leadership intentionally held back the truth about Chernobyl.

PREVARICATION AND INTELLECTUAL IMPAIRMENT DO NOT AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY MAKE, NOT IF YOU'RE *TIME'S* MAN OF THE DECADE.

Gorbachev, however, is more than just a false witness, he is a big wind pudding and bull shoveler:

> Even today I cannot reveal certain facts to the reader. Still, I can assure you that we were not bluffing. Our studies had proved that the potential answer to SDI could meet the requirements . . .

When Gorbachev isn't making up things, he's being stupid in the *bienpensant* manner achievable only through upper-percentile IQ test scores and years of university study. He goes to Bulgaria and says, "It seemed an Eden of orchards and flowers." He visits Western Europe and notices almost nothing except "that public education and medical services were organized more fairly in our country. And our emphasis on public transport was better . . ." And as the Soviet Union comes apart around his ears he is shocked to find, "The people seemed almost to welcome the event!" If you can imagine.

Of course, mere prevarication and intellectual impairment don't make an autobiography, not if you're a *Time* Man of the Decade, international peace prize-winning world statesman, and—according to the August *Vanity Fair*—the fellow Jack Germond most admires on earth. Therefore, Gorbachev leaves plenty of typespace for sanctimony:

> My first book was a success . . . royalties were used for charitable purpose. . . . I might add that I donated both my Nobel Prize and the Fiuggi Prize—a total of more than a million dollars—to the same purposes.

And whining:

> Right-wing circles in the West feared a renewed, dynamic and more democratic Soviet Union, offering peace and co-operation to other nations.

And score-settling:

> Yeltsin, using office scissors, had simulated an attempt at suicide.

And further sanctimony:

> Even when [Yeltsin] began to shower me with accusations and insults of the lowest kind . . . I never lowered myself to his level of kitchen squabbling.

But it gets worse. No amount of lousy verbiage and nonsensical purport can match the awful fact that Mikhail Gorbachev's personality shines forth from every leaf of his gross tome. And, Lord, he is a dull dog. "As I write all this," he yaps, "it occurs to me that the reader may weary of the details of harvests, droughts, irrigation, road networks, and so on." Then he gives more

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details. "There were," says Gorbachev, "endless plans, developments, plenums, memoranda to the Central Committee, 'wheedling' the big bosses, clashes with the 'retrogrades.'" Not one goes undescribed. Even when he is embarked upon an interesting subject, interest flags. During the 1991 attempted coup, Gorbachev was held hostage in a Black Sea resort by aging hard-line Communist Party Central Committee members and he makes the experience as dull as . . . being held hostage in a Black Sea resort by aging hard-line Communist Party Central Committee members.

We learn from *Memoirs* that Gorbachev went to law school, doesn't drink, and had an adolescent passion for amateur theatrics. A teetotaling lawyer who wants to act! Gorbachev's essay subject for his final examination at college was "Stalin—our combat glory, Stalin—the elation of our youth." He got the highest mark. Gorbachev criticizes Khrushchev because "this 'leadership style' . . . would often end up being vulgar. The spontaneity and folksiness occasionally turned into open boorishness, not to mention the foul language and heavy drinking."

It is a small step from looking down on others to looking up to oneself, and Gorbachev takes it. As he says about hearing the claptrap speeches from Politburo members when he was named general secretary, "I was stirred—never before did I have a chance to hear such words about myself and such great appreciation."

A man so well-stocked with self-seeking, self-consequence, self-righteousness, and self-approval can only be expected to be filled with self-pity, too. About the failure of the Communist party to hold on to power, Gorbachev says, "I do not think this is a subject for sarcastic comments or cynical laughter." And in the epilogue he quotes himself telling a journalist, "I do not know anyone against whom so many slings and arrows have been launched as against Gorbachev at present."

If Gorbachev sounds slightly insane there, it's nothing out of the ordinary. He claims that, after the stalemated Icelandic summit with Reagan, "one journalist wrote . . . 'When the General Secretary presented the failure of the Reykjavik meeting as a victory, Raisa Gorbachev was sitting in the conference-hall, looking with awe at her husband, with tears rolling down her face.'" Criticized for the un-Kremlinish act of dragging his missus around in public, Gorbachev responds, "the Western centers of psychological warfare pressed this point in order to discredit the Soviet leader." Those Western centers of psychological warfare are *good*—when Gorbachev ran for president of Russia this June he got about 1 percent of the vote.

THE MAN IS A FIRST-CLASS TOAD-EATER AND SUCK. AND HE PROBABLY ELIMINATED HIS ENEMIES BY BORING THEM TO DEATH.

Plus, the psych-ops corps—or something—has Gorby locked in permanent manic jag. Hear him on the subject of his marriage:

> Our life, our activities and even our appearance aroused jealousy and envy in some. But nature had moulded us this way. It seemed to some that our life was almost a fairy tale, full of pleasure. But it was hard work—although it was joyous—for we were inspired by high ideals.

Memoirs puts to rest the old question, Are leftists crazy or are they charlatans? The answer is yes. Gorbachev is well aware that Marxism is ignorant, useless, and vile. Three of his father's siblings died in the Soviet-induced famine of 1933. His paternal grandfather was exiled to Siberia in 1934 after failing to meet a sowing quota for which no seeds were available. His maternal grandfather, a loyal party hack, was accused of membership in a "counter-revolutionary right-wing Trotskyist organization" and was jailed and tortured in 1937. Raisa's grandfather, arrested on nearly identical baseless charges, was executed the same year. "The super-centralized attempt to control every single detail of life in an immense state sapped the vital energies of society," to put it in the author's own lame words.

And yet Gorbachev hasn't a clue that Marxism is ignorant, useless, and vile. He thinks it needs to be tweaked, "keeping only social, economic and scientific-technological strategies under central direction and leaving everything else to the discretion of the industrial collectives." With liberty and justice for all.

How can these two mutually exclusive ideas of Marxism be contained in one head—in even the double-domed, global consciousness-sized noggin of Mikhail Gorbachev? Easy. The Communist party was Gorbachev's ticket out of Dogpatch, away from the rube village of Privolnoye in the hayseed (during the rare non-drought years when they could grow any) region of Stavropol.

Gorbachev does not give many details about how he rose from assistant combine operator helping screw up the local wheat harvest to general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union helping screw up the world. Or rather, he gives nothing but details. The larger double-deals and back-stabs are

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left to the imagination, as are Gorbachev's techniques of intrigue. Although here and there certain hints are dropped:

> I studied eagerly and passionately.
>
> My work and Raisa Maksimovna's profession compelled us to make a great effort at 'self-improvement.' We used every opportunity to do so.
>
> I had often met Brezhnev. . . . He invariably showed genuine interest in my concerns and lent me his support. Therefore I was not surprised when he suddenly asked . . . "Well, Mikhail Sergeyevich, how are things going in your sheep empire?"
>
> The Stavropol krai accounted for 27 per cent of all the fine wool produced in the Russian Federation. In early summer, after lambing, thousands of flocks grazed in the steppes: a total of ten million sheep. An impressive sight, I can tell you.

The man is a first-class toad-eater and suck. And he probably eliminated his enemies by boring them to death. No job is too disgusting for him. ("I accepted his offer to transfer to the . . . committee as deputy head of the agitation and propaganda department.") Gorbachev wiggles and oozes his way to the top.

And what a top it is. Brezhnev was bughouse. "I remember a Politburo meeting where the chairman had a mental block and could not remember the subject of the discussion," says Gorbachev. "Whenever abuses and mismanagement were mentioned to [Brezhnev], tears would well up in his eyes and he would ask, bewilderment in his voice: 'Is it really that bad?'"

Politburo meetings were incomprehensible: "It was a long table, and when [Brezhnev] consulted with someone on one side of the table . . . those of us sitting at the end of the table on the other side could not hear what was being said." Which is probably just as well, since Mikhail Gorbachev has no discernible sense of humor and Politburo pronouncements were mostly of a hilarious type: "The Central Committee's resolution had designated the North Caucasus as an area where wheat was to be grown on irrigated lands." Whether it wanted to or not. "I had been trying to get to the root of the food problem," says Gorbachev.

John Kascht

The Politburo members didn't know what they were talking about. Or, as Gorbachev puts it, "The established pattern of disseminating information to the leadership of the country failed to provide objective data to manage the life of the society." Himself being a good example. Gorbachev says, "The food situation was bad and it continued to be so. In fact, it became even worse." And in the next paragraph he says, "the grain yield increased by 26.6 million tonnes, meat by 2.5 million tonnes, and milk by over 10 million tonnes . . ." As befits a fully centralized socialist state.

Some of this idiocy was planned. The Politburo actually passed laws to keep itself moronic. "All statistics concerning the military-industrial complex were top secret, inaccessible even to the members of the Politburo." And when Gorbachev took over as head of state he continued to believe in such nonsense as the USSR's having "military and strategic parity" with the United States and that President Reagan failed to respond to Soviet arms-control overtures because he was, perhaps, "overruled by the powerful American military-industrial complex." Gorbachev recounts with bland credulity how "Yevgeny Primakov, who headed a Soviet delegation there, reported a noticeable swing in American public opinion in favour of the Soviet Union, particularly at the grass-roots level."

So Brezhnev dies, Chernenko dies, Andropov dies, and everybody else in the Kremlin is wearing Depends and getting lost on the way to the samovar. By chronological default, Gorbachev becomes boss.

He knows something is amiss. ("Why was our system so unresponsive to renewal and innovation?") His answer is to make the USSR live up to its ideals. Wait a

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minute, the USSR's ideals are materialism, atheism, class warfare, and the subjugation of individual freedom to the will of an all-powerful state. The only thing the Soviet Union ever had going for it was that it didn't work. In a Soviet Union that worked, *everybody* would be dead.

But Gorbachev is building bridges to the future. He will restructure Soviet politics and economics along Chinese lines. "I note for clarity that these ideas were similar to Deng Xiaoping's reform methods," says Gorbachev on page 218. Or maybe not. "I am not convinced by the opinions of some of our politicians that we should have followed the Chinese path," says Gorbachev on page 494. Anyhow, things are going to be real, real different: "[T]here were significant changes occurring in the very understanding of socialism . . . from planning by directive and decree, it was gradually to become planning by recommendation and forecasting." The KGB would come around and recommend you kiss your ass goodbye because the forecast was they were going to shoot you.

Meanwhile there's an uprising in Tiananmen Square and the Berlin Wall is falling. A keen mind like Gorbachev's can't help but understand the significance of these events:

> To avoid dangerous excesses, the checkpoints to the West were opened.

> I agreed with the logic of [Deng Xiaoping's] arguments. 'We are running into the same general problems. We have our hotheads too.'

Communist defeats in Nicaragua, Ethiopia, and even Afghanistan are barely mentioned. And the USSR's timid piffling during Operation Desert Storm is glossed as anti-war diplomacy. Gorbachev just doesn't notice that that gruesome thunder lizard, the Soviet empire, is everywhere in massive death throes. Although to be fair to the man, he was very busy at the time. Gorbachev was busy screwing the Soviet economy with the stroke of a pen:

> At the end of 1990 I signed several decrees proposed by the government on financial matters, which, it turned out, contained serious flaws. For example, one of the decrees set up non-budget funds for the stabilization of the economy. Essentially, they were 'generating' money from nothing.

He was busy establishing "a warm personal rapport with Rajiv Gandhi":

> I was deeply impressed by the way he organically combined the profound philosophic tradition of India and the East with a perfect knowledge and comprehension of European culture.

And, he was busy formulating a numbskull five-point peace plan for Nagorno-Karabakh. Key actions to be taken:

1. Government analysis of situation to be published in the press
2. Gorbachev appears on TV
3. A debate in the Supreme Soviet
4. Various reports made public
5. " . . . administrative agencies were to decide on the stationing of troops at flash points, but without imposing a curfew."

Mikhail Gorbachev was the Jimmy Carter of the Communist bloc. The Russians hate him. We should, too. Of course, there is always a certain kind of person who identifies with and approves of the Gorbachev type. Gorbachev, for instance. And Carter. They are worse than evil. True evil at least has the virtue of being rare. But the woods—and the steppes and the plains—are full of Mikhails. He's the person who makes evil possible with his myopia, his pieties, his perverse alternations between hot-air egotism and lickspittle humility. On judgment day, Gorbachev won't be standing up with Stalin and Mao. He'll be on his knees, shining their shoes. ♦

Theater

Springtime for Furtwängler

By Paul Cantor

When the two con men in Mel Brooks's classic film comedy *The Producers* decide to mount a sure-fire flop on Broadway, they hit on a musical comedy called *Springtime for Hitler*—a nostalgic romp through the life and loves of the Führer guaranteed to outrage and disgust the New York theater crowd. Real-life producers Alexander Cohen and Max Cooper might have brooded a bit about the possibility that the British play they brought to Broadway in October would prove to be *Springtime for Hitler 1996*—only without the inadvertent success *Springtime for Hitler* enjoys in *The Producers*. For Ronald Harwood's *Taking Sides* is a sympathetic account of what happened when the German conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler found himself accused

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of being a Nazi after World War II.

Unlike *Springtime for Hitler*, *Taking Sides* is certainly not pro-Nazi, though it may be somewhat anti-American. The play is primarily concerned with the question of whether in fact Furtwängler was a Nazi, and, if not, whether he was unjustly maligned. Nowhere was Furtwängler more vilified than in New York, and so, despite the critical and box-office success of the original London production, it took courage to bring Ronald Harwood's fascinating but flawed play to Broadway.

Taking Sides is a contest of wills between Furtwängler and Major Arnold, an American army officer assigned to prepare a case against the conductor for a German denazification tribunal. (Harwood mixes fact and fiction throughout; the character of Arnold is entirely his creation.) Furtwängler has the self-confidence of genius and an imperious manner born of years of adulation from an adoring public. But in these circumstances, he is close to helpless. Arnold holds all the cards; indeed, he holds the future of Furtwängler's musical career and life in his hands. Each in his own way is used to commanding others—Furtwängler as a conductor and Arnold as an army officer—and so the stage is set for a powerful confrontation pitting an inner spiritual authority against the brute force of the military.

I would be the last person to compare Ronald Harwood to Shakespeare, but there are moments in *Taking Sides* when the intensity of the exchanges between the two men almost reaches the fever pitch of the battles between Othello and Iago. The bewildered and tormented Furtwängler, a man who feels comfortable expressing himself only in music before a sympathetic concert audience, is faced instead with the unfamiliar task of articulating his thoughts in words before a hostile philistine who has the power to silence him.

Harwood captures Furtwängler's strength and conviction, both necessary for someone whose calling it was to impose his will on hundreds of musicians; as one character puts it, "a conductor is also a dictator." But his Furtwängler also has human, all-too-human, qualities, which allowed Goebbels and Goering to manipulate him for the benefit of the Third Reich.

CORBIS-BETTMANN

The conductor in 1921, at 35

The two halves of Furtwängler blend together seamlessly in Daniel Massey's brilliant performance. Massey does a superb job of conveying the artist's otherworldliness—the way Furtwängler is simply at a loss when it comes to fitting into everyday human surroundings. Massey's Furtwängler finds an ordinary object like a chair something to be wondered at and dealt with as if for the first time. Characters in Beckett plays have an easier time taking a seat.

His adversary, Major Arnold, has been chosen by the American authorities to build the case against Furtwängler precisely because he has never heard of him and has no idea how great an artist he is. To convey to Arnold how important Furtwängler is in Germany, his superiors tell him the conductor is "Bob Hope and Betty Grable rolled into one."

Ed Harris can't help but imbue Arnold with some of the all-American character he embodied in both *The Right Stuff* and *Apollo 13*. This strengthens and balances the play, perhaps in spite of Harwood's own intentions. Arnold is basically a one-dimensional character in the script, although Harwood makes him puzzling in one respect.

Why, we wonder, is he so determined "to nail the bandleader" despite the fact that his inquiry is turning up little or nothing that suggests the "bandleader" was doing the bidding of the Nazi party? In the second act, Arnold reveals he has been traumatized by the sight of concentration camps and is taking out his rage on the most convenient object at hand—even though he is repeatedly confronted by evidence that Furtwängler personally saved many Jews from those camps.

In point of fact, Furtwängler was acquitted by the denazification tribunal (an event that takes place after the play comes to a close). The

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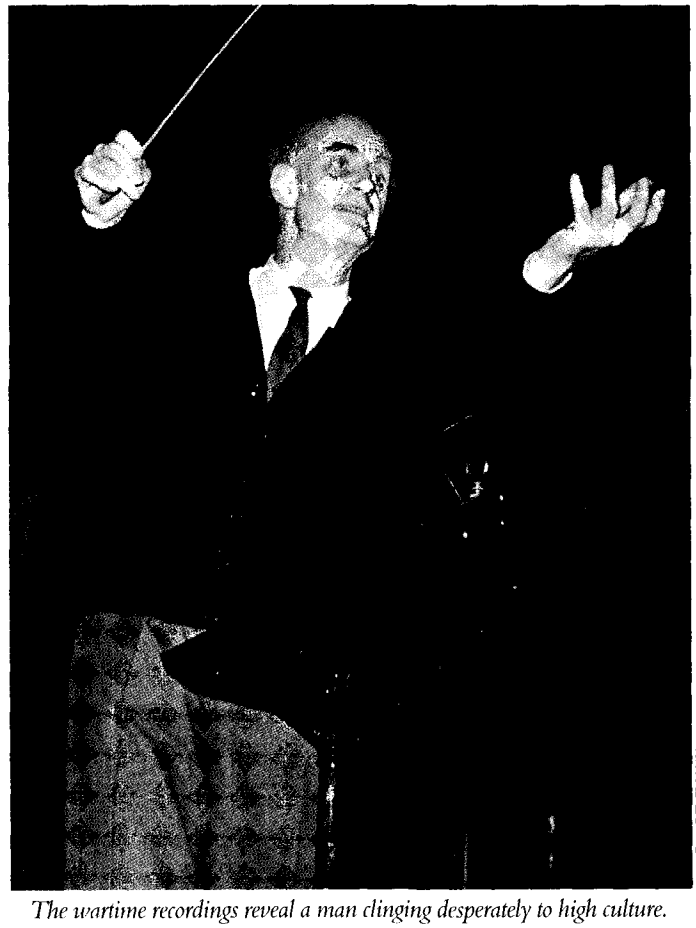
evidence of his Nazi activities or sympathies proved so flimsy that it dissolved upon examination, while there was overwhelming proof of his willingness to stand up to the Nazi authorities and even to insult Hitler personally. In 1945, a contemporary of Furtwängler's described an occasion nine years earlier when the Nazis tried to badger him into accepting an official position:

> Goebbels, Goering, and Hitler cornered [Furtwängler] and tried everything to make him accept, climaxing in Hitler's shrill threat that he would send him to a concentration camp—and Furtwängler's calm answer: "Herr Reichskanzler, I will find myself there only in the very best company!" This so surprised Hitler that he couldn't answer, but vanished from the room.

Furtwängler's prosecutors tried to make the case that he helped only famous Jewish musicians, but in truth, his aid was widespread and undiscriminating in the good sense of the term. At the hearing, the number of Jews who came forward to testify to Furtwängler's efforts on their behalf persuaded even a heavily biased tribunal to rule in his favor.

The worst one can say against Furtwängler is that he was politically unskilled and naive enough to allow himself at times to be manipulated by Hitler, but the same could be said of Neville Chamberlain and many others who had more reason than Furtwängler to know better.

Harwood demonstrates considerable dramaturgical skill in shaping the plot to keep the audience from simply siding with the great artist against the crude soldier. The play opens with Arnold preparing his assistant for the interrogation, predicting exactly what the next witness will say on Furtwängler's behalf. His prescience makes the initial pro-Furtwängler testimony we hear seem like a predictable party line. Harwood uses the trappings of stock courtroom melodrama—surprise witnesses, the announcement of newly discovered evidence, traps set for the unwary defendant—to lead the audience and Arnold to think Furtwängler is indeed about to be nailed at any moment.



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The wartime recordings reveal a man clinging desperately to high culture.

Harwood also allows Arnold to use all his professional skill—he was an insurance investigator in peacetime—to turn the most powerful exculpatory evidence against Furtwängler. Does everyone tell the same story of Furtwängler's goodness and cite his unceasing efforts on behalf of Jews in the music world? That kind of agreement among witnesses, Arnold says, is the first sign of fraud. Did Furtwängler really succeed in saving Jews from the camps or helping them to escape from Germany? If he did, in Arnold's eyes that provides the surest proof that he really did have friends in high places.

But Harwood offers an alternative, sinister, and very troubling interpretation of Arnold's role in the interrogation. Arnold seizes on any anti-Semitic remark Furtwängler is ever reported to have made, and yet he himself refers to arson as "Jewish lightning" and pointedly calls a subordinate "Weil" instead of "Wills," thus contemptuously restoring the Jewish name the subordinate changed when he emigrated to the United States. In Harwood's portrayal, Arnold is something of an anti-Semite himself and thus is morally compromised in his crusade against Furtwängler.

Harwood even suggests that Arnold may be the front man for an American conspiracy against Furtwängler. Arnold is perfectly capable of feigning emotions to accomplish his purposes as an interrogator, and thus his outburst about the concentration camps may simply be a calculated stab at breaking the conductor down after all else has failed. At the play's end, Arnold admits the case against the

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conductor is weak, but still advises the denazification tribunal to go ahead with the hearing because he has a pliant journalist named Delbert Clark who will report the story any way he wants.

There was a reporter named Delbert Clark who did, in fact, cover the story for the *New York Times* and did slant his reporting against Furtwängler in a way that poisoned the conductor's reputation in the United States. And many people, including Jewish musicians like Yehudi Menuhin, have wondered publicly why Furtwängler was singled out for harsh treatment by the American authorities when other conductors with more tainted records—like Herbert von Karajan, who did join the Nazi party—were allowed to return to their musical careers with comparative ease.

Still, despite Harwood's dark hints about a conspiracy against Furtwängler, his play succeeds in conveying the atmosphere in which it seemed perfectly plausible to subject the conductor's wartime activities to intense scrutiny. Given the horrors of the Nazi regime, so unprecedented and so fresh in 1946, even the slightest suggestion that Furtwängler might have been implicated in Hitler's atrocities had to be investigated. The legitimate outrage all decent people feel at Nazis and Nazi sympathizers means that, to this day, Furtwängler's case remains controversial, arousing passions for and against him that give *Taking Sides* whatever dramatic complexity it possesses.

Ultimately, though, Harwood takes an easy way out by having Furtwängler break down in an admission that he was wrong to stay in Germany. He suddenly becomes ill and must be helped offstage, leaving unresolved whether his outburst constitutes a confession of guilt or merely the acknowledgment of an error in judgment.

The abrupt and overwrought ending is symptomatic of a problem throughout. In his effort to keep his material dramatic, Harwood is repeatedly tempted into making it melodramatic. At one point he has a crazed woman charge onto the stage, ostensibly to attack Furtwängler but really to defend him because he once saved the life of her Jewish husband. The central situation in *Taking Sides* is so inherently dramatic that there was no need to gussy it up with false melodrama.

Harwood fails to measure up to another challenge: the need to convey a sense of Furtwängler's genuine greatness as an artist. An audience unfamiliar with Furtwängler's work must take his genius on faith. This is always a problem when someone tries to portray art either in drama or film, but just because it is difficult does not mean it can't be done. *Taking Sides* does feature a few recordings of Beethoven and Bruckner symphonies conducted by Furtwängler, but hardly enough to convince a novice listener of his preeminence.

If I had to name the single greatest conductor of this century, it would be Furtwängler. At his best, he achieved revelatory results beyond the capacity of any other conductor. He could draw sounds out of an orchestra that have to be heard to be believed, particularly the warmth and tonal richness of the strings. Above all, Furtwängler struggled his way to the inner meaning of the music he conducted, and more often than not he used his flexibility of tempo and his exquisitely molded phrasing to reveal and highlight musical form.

And now that we have far greater access to the recordings Furtwängler made during World War II, we can better understand why the conductor chose to stay in Germany throughout the ordeal of the Hitler years. These recordings suggest what a price he paid in personal terms for his efforts to keep alive the great tradition of German music in his country's darkest hour. Their grim power, coupled with the anguish that suffuses them, belies Arnold's theory in the play that Furtwängler stayed in Germany to lead a hedonistic life as the pampered darling of the Nazi elite.

The man conducting these performances, with all their hectic drama and febrile energy, is suffering. And yet, in their achingly beautiful moments of musical repose, one catches glimpses of the higher world of German culture Furtwängler was desperately reaching for and clinging to throughout the Nazi years.

It is worth listening above all to Furtwängler's 1942 performance (with the Berlin Philharmonic) of the Beethoven Ninth. It is by no means his best recording of the symphony, but may nonetheless be the most remarkable Ninth we have. In the last movement, with its great choral outbursts affirming the joy of freedom, the music becomes almost hysterical. Trying to put oneself in the place of the 1942 audience listening to this performance in Berlin, one begins to understand what so many people meant when they said that Furtwängler was their only beacon of hope within Nazi Germany.

To put oneself in the place of Furtwängler during this performance is next to impossible, but one can at least empathize with his desperate effort to salvage the grandeur and beauty of Beethoven's vision in the midst of Hitler's betrayal of the German cultural heritage.

Furtwängler's wartime recordings give us a chance to hear the conductor truly speak for himself in the only way he really could. *Taking Sides* is no substitute for that, but it is a valuable and lively piece of theater. Maybe it is springtime for Furtwängler after all. ♦

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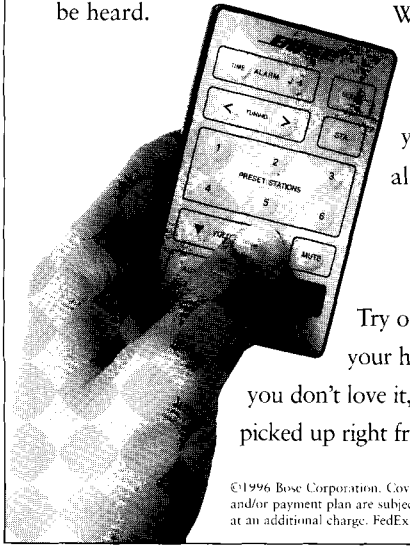

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